



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: THEWALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

“READ IT AGAIN.”

Spoiler alert if you haven’t already read this series. Go ahead and skip to the next paragraph if you don’t want to know what those words are from. Okay... all clear? Those are the last words spoken in the final issue of this series. I’m not going to say who says them or what they’re referring to, but that’s what’s said. When I wrote those words, I wanted them to be kind of meta. They pertain to the story in an emotional way, but they also have a literal meaning in the real world. Now that you’ve read the entire WALKING DEAD series and you know how it concludes and where it leaves you emotionally, you’ll have a different perspective on what you’re reading. The journey will seem different now. I’ve always felt THE WALKING DEAD was a story of hope, it almost never reads that way if you don’t know how things end. So now readers can, for the first time, see the story how I did as they read it.

Okay, enough on that.

So why are we here? Why was THE WALKING DEAD black and white in the first place? Well... the real reason is that when THE WALKING DEAD debuted a mere 17 years ago, it was the sixth book I had launched at Image, and well, none of those books lasted past issue №6. INVINCIBLE had launched ten months before and it was looking pretty iffy that we’d make it past issue №12. Printing a comic in black and white is cheaper than printing in color, typically, so I figured if the book was in black and white it would definitely make it to issue №6 and maybe if we were lucky, past issue №12. Different times.

In addition to that, *Night of the Living Dead*, the first Romero zombie movie, the one that kicked the whole craze off, was black and white. In its early development, this series was also going to double as a pseudo sequel to *Night of the Living Dead*, even using the title, as it had fallen into the public domain. So it only seemed natural to do the series in black and white.

The last reason... gore. This book is mighty gory, it can get pretty gross at times. And while I may not understand it myself, some people find that to be off-putting. Although, when presented in black and white... those scenes can be less jarring and gross. As much as I love gore, I never wanted it to overshadow the emotion of the scene, and black and white, I feel, helps keep the focus on the emotion and loss than all that splashy red stuff.

So why rerelease the series in color now?

Well, there’s a bunch of reasons.

Over the years there have been countless scenes that I’ve wanted to see in full color, that I feel would have more punch and impact if there was color to help draw attention to this thing or that. At times I’d considered doing color scenes or color issues, but that always seemed like a mistake.

Since the TV show happened, I’ve heard from countless TV fans who tried to get into the comic and found the black and white to be a barrier they couldn’t cross. Some people, it turns out, just don’t care for black and white comics.

The main reason is that with the series now done, I just think it’s a great way to open things up for a whole new audience. Despite the recent news of THE WALKING DEAD television show ending with Season 11, THE WALKING DEAD will probably be burning up television screens with new content for years, if not decades, to come with its various spin-off series set in the world of THE WALKING DEAD. That’s a tremendous opportunity to showcase the wonder of the comics medium and

pull more people into this medium we love so much. Also, while THE WALKING DEAD is designed to read well in all formats, I think the single issue format, with the anticipation between issues that allows the cliffhangers to sink in... and torture you a little, is the ideal format. That’s why there are no plans to ever collect the series in color. If you want to experience this series in full color... you’re going to need to buy these single issues.

This series also gives us the opportunity to work with some amazing people.

Dave McCaig has long been my favorite colorist in comics. His work always stands out to me, no matter who he is coloring. Seeing this world through his hues is a real sight to behold. As I type this, he’s nearing completion on the first 100 issues (he’s been working for four years!) and oh, man... it’s just GLORIOUS. Charlie Adlard and Tony Moore have never looked better.

We’re also getting to work with David Finch, Julian Totino Tedesco, and Arthur Adams on new covers. It’s been really awesome seeing those three provide a new vision for these characters everyone has fallen in love with.

Finch will be handling the main covers of the series, showing new interpretations of scenes in each issue, sometimes playing on the original cover, as with this issue, sometimes doing something entirely new, which is great. They’re all amazing. I can’t wait for you to see what’s coming up.

Tedesco won’t be doing a cover for every issue, he’s just going to be popping in from time to time to lend his talented brush to a memorable moment from the series, like Rick encountering bicycle girl, or riding into Atlanta for the first time, etc. So keep a lookout for those.

Adams will be showcasing our iconic cast as they appear in the book. He won’t be featuring EVERY character as they’re introduced, but the biggest and most important will be illustrated by this legendary artist.

We even have series artist Charlie Adlard coming back to draw a series of connecting covers for these first six issues, showing his vision of the events from the mere six issues he didn’t draw.

Tony Moore’s original covers for the series will be featured with a fresh coat of paint from the esteemed Mr. McCaig all the way until we get to issue №25, where Charlie finally took over on covers, and we’ll see McCaig recoloring his fantastic work.

One of the coolest aspects of this is that we’re getting an upgrade in the lettering department, as well. Series letterer Rus Wooton is coming back to reletter the first 19 issues that I lettered myself. So while I’m being very careful not to rewrite any dialogue, because once I pull the thread on that sweater... this whole process would come crashing down, we are going to update the look of the lettering and correct any mistakes that might have slipped through along the way.

So I couldn’t be more excited about this special presentation of the series that changed everything for me. I hope you’ll join us for what looks to be a fun 8-year adventure as we embark once again on this journey.

It’s going to be a fun ride. Again.

-Robert Kirkman
Backwoods, CA
September 2020

The Walking Dead

By Robert Kirkman & Tony Moore



Here you'll see the original proposal for **THE WALKING DEAD** as it was sent to Image. This was sent in somewhere around the end of November 2002. Eric Stephenson (now Publisher, then Marketing Director at Image) commented on the fact that the five-page story contained in the proposal was a lame horror movie opening... I'll admit it was terribly cliché, now that I look back on it. After hearing Eric's comments, I came up

with the idea of Rick waking up in a coma and restricting the book around that... and we all know what came of **THAT**, don't we?

Another interesting change to note is that Lori was originally named Carol--and they were originally from Pennsylvania, presumably Pittsburgh.

— Robert Kirkman

ANNOUNCEMENTS. WE
ASSURE YOU WE WILL
STAY ON AIR AS
LONG AS WE
CAN.

CONTINUING
OUR AROUND THE
CLOCK COVERAGE OF
THE EVENT THAT IS
SWEEPING THE NATION...
BY ALL ACCOUNTS THE
DEAD SEEM TO BE
LEAVING THEIR GRAVES...
RETURNING TO LIFE...
AND FEEDING ON
THE... FLESH... OF
THE LIVING.

YES, YOU
HEARD ME
RIGHT. THE EYE
WITNESS REPORTS
FROM ACROSS THE
GLOBE HAVE ALL
BEEN CONFIRMED.
YOU'VE SEEN THE
STUNNING FOOTAGE.
THERE IS NO DENYING
THIS HORRENDOUS
NEWS.

IT IS
THE HUMBLE
OPINION OF **THIS**
NEWSMAN, THAT
WE MAY WELL BE
WITNESSING...THE
END OF THE
WORLD AS WE
KNOW IT.



Kirkman & Moore
ELECTRONICS INC.





JESUS! THIS IS JUST A SAD WAR OF THE WORLDS RIP OFF!

I--I DON'T KNOW, RICK... I THINK THIS LOOKS LIKE IT COULD BE REAL.

IT HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR A WHILE.



OH, COME ON, CAROL! "WE MAY VERY WELL BE WITNESSING THE END OF THE WORLD." THIS SOUNDS REAL TO YOU?



THE NEWSCASTER SEEMS SCARED. HE WOULDN'T SEEM SO SCARED IF IT WASN'T REAL.



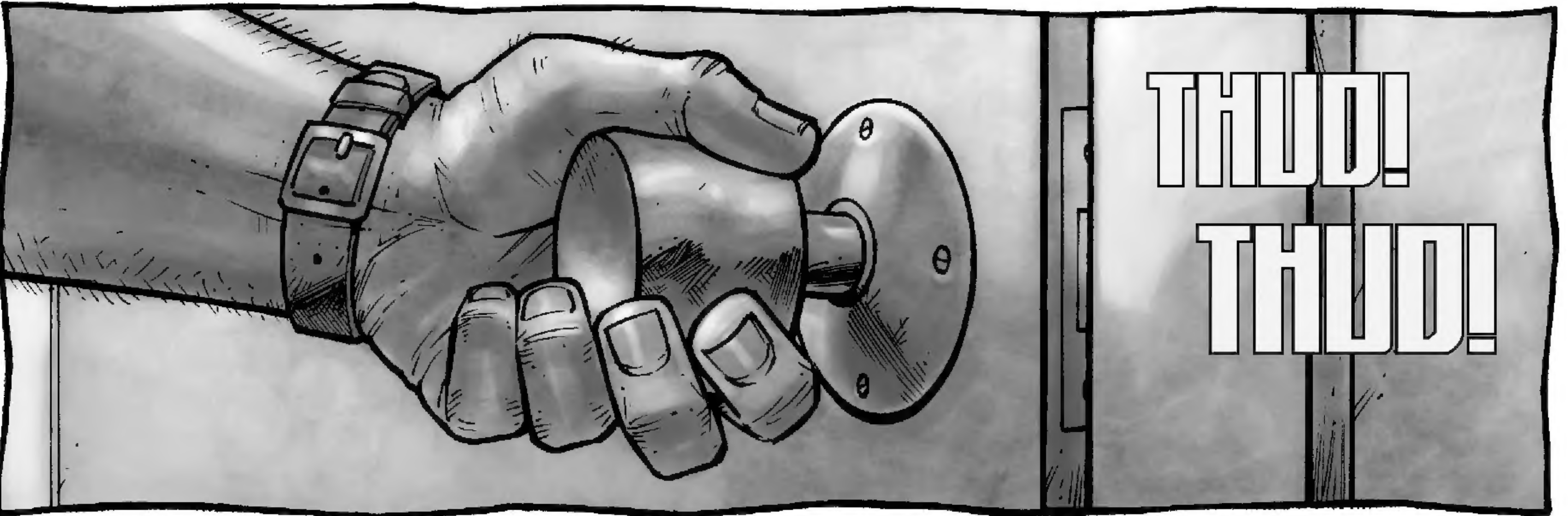
OF COURSE HE SEEMS SCARED! HE'S TRYING TO MAKE THIS CRAP BELIEVABLE.

I'M NOT LISTENING TO ANOTHER WORD OF THIS...

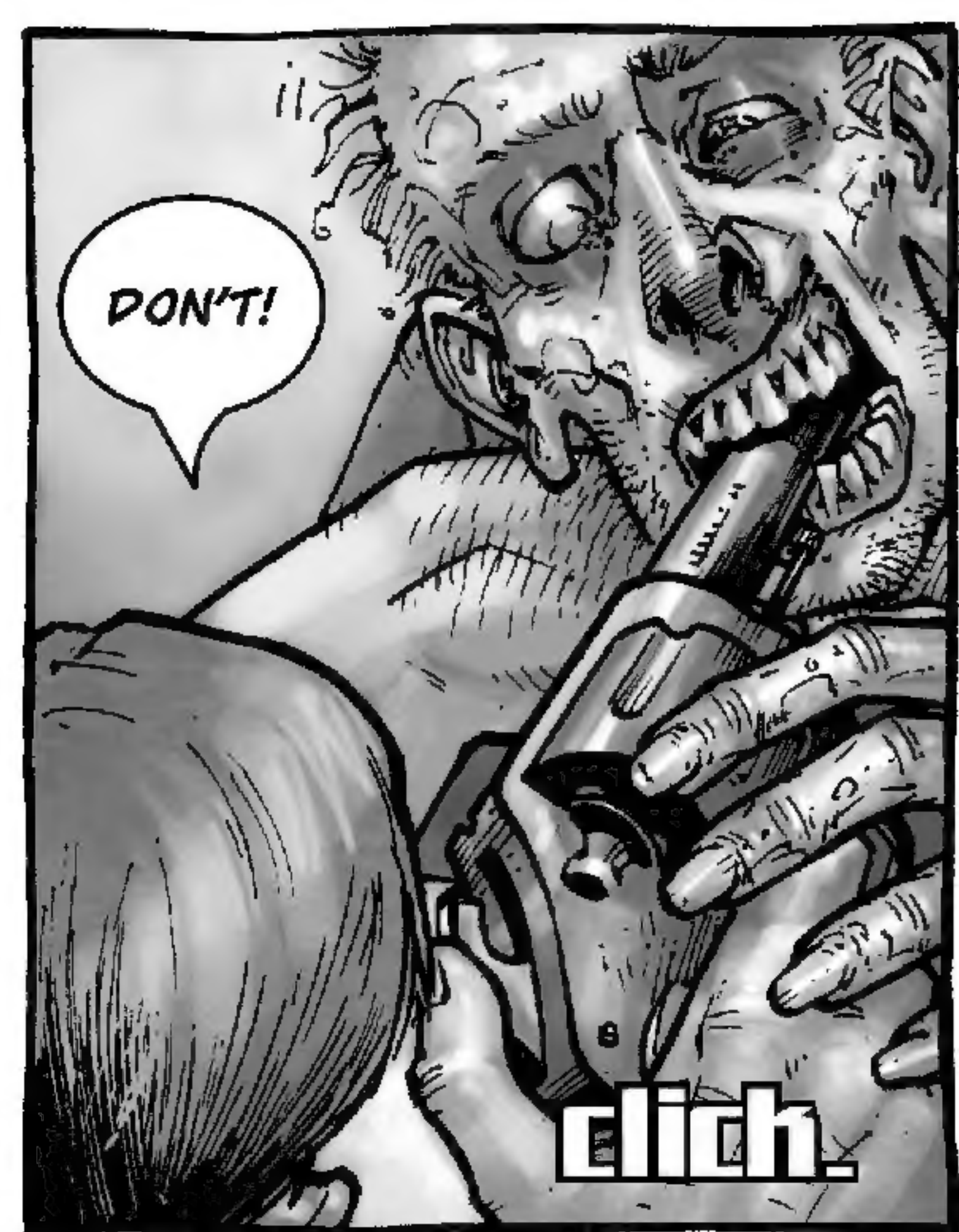


...I'M TURNING THIS THING OFF AND WE'RE GOING TO BED.

NO!







BLAM!



The Walking Dead Proposal

Story

Rick Grimes is a small town police officer in the state of Pennsylvania. He lives in a nice house out in the county with his wife, Carol and his son, Carl. Rick doesn't see much action, aside from target training he's never even fired his gun, he's by no means a hero. When the news hits that the undead are roaming the countryside committing acts of mass murder and eating their victims Rick must rise to the challenge to protect his family from the madness around him.

This book is about a man that will do anything to ensure that his family is safe. When private residences are deemed unsafe Rick takes his family on the road, in search of food, shelter, and something that at least resembles stability. We follow the Grimes family as they try to find a way to return to the normal life they once new. The first story arc will detail their trek across the state that results in their takeover of an abandoned high school. This high school quickly becomes a well-defended stronghold, as life in America turns into something not unlike medieval times. Once a safe base of operations is established Rick will lead an army on a quest to expand the safe zone, and eventually take back the planet... or at least try.

Format

The Walking Dead will be black and white, just like the best horror movies, in fact, even the covers could be black and white, further cutting down on the already minimal printing costs. The art will be completely gray-toned. Each issue will be a standard 22 pages. At the end of each year (sales allowing) a trade paperback collecting the 12 issues from the previous year will be released the same month as the first issue of the following year, providing a perfect jumping on point each year.(volume 1 shipping the same month as issue 13, etc.)

Contact

Robert Kirkman

1000 Broadway
New York, NY 10001
212-512-1000
www.robertkirkman.com



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

What would THE WALKING DEAD be without LETTER HACKS?

Sean here, who has summoned up the ghosts of Letter Hacks' past to thrill and delight you all. Honestly... I have NO IDEA what readers' reactions were to the very first issue of this historic series... but look at this, the very first reader letter this month was from SEAN! It's totally a different Catholic Sean, but that's a weird coincidence. Anyways, going forward, we're going to pick the best of best and, probably more often, the best of the worst, and have some fun.

Keep sending in your letters, so every once in a while we can check in with present day readers. We'll be back in two weeks, so see you then!

I'm going to start this one off with a clarification of my text piece that ran in issue #1. In that piece I said that I do not consider this to be a horror book. What I meant by that was that the book wasn't intended to solely scare the reader. I in no way meant that I was embarrassed by the horror genre or that I thought this book was "better" than mere horror fiction. I LOVE the horror genre and I embrace it. If this book DOES scare you... GREAT... fantastic... Tony's going above and beyond if that's happening. What I was trying to say is that this is a book about a guy's life... that happens to feature zombies. As time goes on... there will more than likely be entire issues that don't have ANY zombies in them. I hope that doesn't scare any of you away. If I've done my job right, you won't even care. I mean... this issue only had what? TWO zombies? You didn't even notice did you?

Now, on to the mail!

Dear Walking Dead crew,

I would first like to say that earlier this fall I picked up books 1 and 2 of Battle Pope, and as a catholic I have to say these are the most appalling, rude, and hilarious comics I have ever had the pleasure to read! Seeing Jesus being groped by a bunch of women had me rolling on the floor for days. And the artwork simply enhances the action and hilarity. So in short I am fan. So when I heard you guys were making a comic based entirely on zombies I knew I had to pick it up. In truth I think I was expecting something like Battle Pope, a zombie comic full of sick jokes, violence and humor, but to my surprise I got something that was entirely different and I have to say I am still greatly pleased with the results of your first issue. This series brings back good old memories of Romero's Living Dead Series. Where rather than focusing all the attention on blowing away the undead (as they tend to do now in recent flicks) you both bring back the feelings of humanity, which lie behind the waves of zombies. Small scenes like when he collapses after taking the bike really make you understand how horrible such a situation would be. So I can only imagine what disturbing depictions we'll see in the next issue of The Walking Dead! Keep up the good work guys.

Sean

Like the solicitation says "From the guys behind Battle Pope and Brit comes something COMPLETELY different." I'm glad you liked it. Every now and then... I get the hankering to do something more serious in tone... this time I actually did it.

Hi,

I have just read your wonderful 1st issue

of "The Walking Dead," and along with Tony Moore's outstanding line work I'm sure it's going to be a success. Since reading your letter to the readers at the end of the story I was happy to discover that you also have a healthy respect for the genre. I, too grew up with the Romero films, actually I'm one of the few who actually got to see "Dawn of the Dead" at the theaters when it was initially released in its limited run. Being a teen at the time, yes I snuck in, something resonated in me that slowly developed over the years as I grew older and more well-read. I'm a graduate student now at Oklahoma State University, majoring in English and writing, and now have the temperament and hopefully the skills to appreciate what was scratching at the base of my spine those many years ago. It was a fear, a fear of what mankind can become when faced with such a terrible adversity. The horror of watching people succumb to their more base instincts, or the exaltation when people can rise above their stations is what intrigued. The extenuating reaction of how we respond is the drama, not the rotting corpses scratching at the door. What scared me the most was the thought of how quickly civilization can crumble when infected from within. The whole social commentary Romero injected in his works and what I'm pleased to see you and Tony perpetuating is what infected me to appreciate this genre. So here's to you, Robert and Tony, thanks for keeping the integrity of the living dead intact and not going for the cheap thrills of gratuitous gore. The one aspect of issue 1 that had me spellbound was the female zombie bicyclist who lay rotting away as Officer Grimes reacts. Deeply tragic and moving at the same time, especially when he returns to end her misery or is it? Anyway that scene burned in my mind and established to me that the two of you are on the crux creating something fantastically engaging. Thanks for your time, and I'm anxiously awaiting the rest of the saga.

Sincerely,
Patrick Wheeler

I'm glad people are getting what was going on with the female cyclist zombie. That was a tough scene to do with little or no dialogue and I think Tony did a swell job portraying the emotions I wanted shown there. I'm really trying to play this in as realistic as I can and it's very gratifying that you people are responding to it. I have yet to receive a "less drama, more comedy..." I mean, you guys did BATTLE POPE!" letter... and for that, I am thankful.

Hey, I just wanted to say that I really enjoy your comic "The Walking Dead." I have a few questions. How long did it take you to draw it, and not to be rude or anything but how much do you make off it? Keep up the good work.

JARULES615

Tony and I have been working a total of eleven years on THE WALKING DEAD and have to date made nearly 7.8 million dollars off it. Glad you liked the book.

Hey Robert and Tony.

I read the first issue of Walking Dead today and I have to say it looks pretty promising... even if the zombie genre is pretty tapped out at this point. Rob's writing is great as usual (did I mention I'm a big fan?) and I love Tony's art (a little Erik Larson-esque in places, which is never a bad thing). I was a bit disappointed at first that the art was B&W, but having thought about it, I think it works in conveying the sombre, grim tone of the story. Plus, you can be as gory and disgusting as you like in B&W without grossing readers out.

Out of curiosity, the opening sequence of Rick in hospital reminded me a lot of the second scene in Danny Boyle's excellent 28 Days Later where Jim wakes up in a deserted London hospital. Have you seen the movie and was this an homage of sorts?

Anyway, the comic's great and I look forward to reading issue two.

Cheers,
Dann Lennard

God had some extra "Ns" lying around that day hmmm? Yeah... the black and white thing does help out the gore and keep it from getting too graphic... I hadn't thought of that. And yeah... Danny Boyle can kiss my ass.

I'm really looking forward to your new book.

Awesome artwork; story; a perfect filler for any lover of Romero movies.

Paul Nunes

Yeah, see... I'm ripping on Romero... not Danny Boyle. I mean... have some respect for the classics. If this book is anything... it's a love letter to George Romero... to make up for all those nasty letters I've sent him demanding that he get off his ass and make the fourth Dead film.

Robert,

My name is Rhonda. I wanted to respond to your request with thoughts about your comic "The Walking Dead".

This story is full of irony. My husband and myself were in Comic book World in Florence, KY. He was looking for something else to read in addition to his usually list. I saw a copy of your comic book and thought it would be right up his alley. I pointed it out, he looked it over and decided to give it a try.

We came back home to Dry Ridge, KY; which happens to be in Grant County. After he read the book, he suggested that I take a look at it.

I was a bit surprised to say the least when on

the first page you have Grant County in the book. I stated out loud "Hang on a sec here, where is this guy from?". My husband then flipped a few pages and showed me Cynthiana Police Station. When I saw that, I knew that you had to have come from close by.

My husband went on doing a few other things and I read. I finally got to the page where you were asking for thoughts and feelings about the book. When I looked at the address and saw Lexington, KY, I laughed out loud. I pointed this out to my husband, he then asked me if there was really a Harrison Memorial Hospital. I said probably, I know we have a Harrison County.

I informed my husband that I was going to write to you and share our funny little story with you. This book was bought by sheer luck. And you are writing about our little corner of the world. It makes me proud to know this.

As to your story, you have hit the nail on the head with where you are going with this, based on this story and your comments about what you were trying to accomplish. My husband, two kids and myself love scary movies with lots of details. But you have touched on about the only thing that in any way ruffles my husband. The kids are easy to spook. I just love the thought process of figuring out what is next. But Roger has always been a Zombie person.

We are looking forward to the next issue.

Thank you for your time,
Rhonda Moore

Yeah, the idea to actually set the geographically in our stomping grounds was something I thought would be fun. Of course... I didn't actually check to see if there WAS a prison in Grant County. I figured most people wouldn't even notice and to be honest I think you and your husband were the only ones. As you can see now, we don't STAY in Kentucky but I'm sure we'll go back eventually. Oh, and Harrison County is where Cynthiana is and Harrison Memorial is in Cynthiana. That's where Tony and I went to high

school. That rinky dink paper there should do a story on us... it couldn't hurt to have the locals behind us.

I just picked up your first issue, and it's everything I was hoping it would be. When I first heard of this, I couldn't wait for the release. The illustrations are very strong very much follow the idea of zombies. Also I feel that the story line and plot will make for an exciting series. It's good that the character is moving around to different places, instead of just staying with that man Morgan Jones in the house. That certainly would take away the freshness of the story.

Also, with that write up at the end, I completely agree with you. There are no better zombie movies than Romero's. For me, personally my favorite movie would have to be Day of the Dead. It just seems to have a better visual aspect to it, and if he was able to create the script he originally had, I think everyone would rank that as the best Zombie film ever. I wish you luck, and I think that you're doing the zombie genre justice with this comic release.

George

I actually think the version of Day that got made is better than the original script. I think the original script was a bit over the top. It was cool, and would have been GREAT had it been made... but I really like the way it came out. I don't think we're missing anything by the fact Romero had to cut back for budgetary reasons.

Don't change a thing.
The more I read TWD №1 the more I think it's one of the best comic books Image has published to date, and potentially one the best series as well.
Keep it about survival and change, which is what Zombie stories should be all about.
Keep it about Rick.
Keep it in black and white.
Maintain continuity at all costs.

AND PLEASE keep Tony Moore for at least the first 12 issues, if you can't keep him indefinitely.

One question: Is this going to be Monthly or Bi-Monthly?

Thanks for making this book and putting it out, can't wait 'til №2.

Jeremy C. Flowers

We plan to stick to your advice. As far as I know Tony's in for the long haul. I can't imagine doing this book without him. I hope you've caught on by now that this is a monthly book.

Hey there

Just a quick note to say congrats on an outstanding first issue that met my expectations and went beyond them... WAY beyond them. You managed to get a decent intro to what looks to be a promising story and a character that I eagerly wait to find out more about and find out about a way messed up world as he does.

Also while I originally groaned at lack of colour I think it was a very smart move. Colour would have detracted from the overall effect - for me anyway - and Romero's classic was in Black and White and was way more effective than it's technicolour sequels or remakes, so whether this was a conscious or financial decision, keep it that way as long as possible.

So that's it. Kept it quick and as to the point as I could and looking forward to the next issue (which can't get here fast enough.)

Later
Craig Wood

I can't say that the financial aspect of doing books in black and white was never brought up but I promise it wasn't the deciding factor. This book will ALWAYS be black and white.



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome back to another installment of reanimated Letter Hacks—a painstakingly curated selection of letters that ran in the original issue. Sean here, having fun with irony at such responses as “I just don’t think the sequentials would work as well with all that color fighting for your attention. Trust me, kids... black and white is for the better.” That’s what this is all about, right? Let us know how you feel about that and all things at the email address above, and take care out there!

Welcome back, people. Glad you could make it back to our little party. The response to this book just continues to grow. Sales on this issue are actually back on par with issue 1 and it appears we are on a positive sales curve, gaining readers each month. This is fantastic news because it means it looks like Tony and I might actually get to stick on this book for the long haul which as I’m sure you all know is up in the air with new books... I mean issue six could have been our last issue, but with sales what they are and being on the rise... things are looking good for the longevity of this book. And we owe it all to you, thanks. Keep spreading the word.

Well, with all that out of the way... we might as well answer some letters. That’s always fun, right? We’re still getting mail on issue 1 as well as issue 2 so the letters will be a bit mixed up between the two issues.

Letter Hacks,

A happy ending in issue 2? What are you doing here? You guys are breaking down people's expectations and going in interesting directions is what you're doing. I can't wait to meet the new supporting cast. More fodder.

Congrats on the good press Walking Dead has been receiving at sites like Newsarama and 4thrail. It's selling great at my store before I even have a chance to talk it up. It deserves it. Tony's art is just gorgeous in this book. The establishing shot of Rick and his car, the desolate Atlanta and more are just epic and convincingly real.

In some of those interviews they bring up the similarities to how the film 28 Days Later opens with the main character in a coma. Well, that's where the similarity ends, I'm sure we can all agree. And for the record, it's a sci-fi convention. They did it in Resident Evil too, which predates 28 Days Later and they did it in Day of the Triffids. It's a convention that we have probably all thought of or seen at some point. It's an idea in our subconscious. You showed us how

it happened though and that's important. You showed us Rick's partner, you showed us Rick didn't have an opportunity to shoot (and following from issue 1, it seems he's probably never had to shoot anyone before). There's enough originality there that I believe readers will go back to that come trade paperback time and be able to appreciate it for what it is.

Questions:

- 1) Do you have an ending in mind? Is this a finite series?
- 2) What are the best and worst zombie films?
- 3) Any chance of printing a photo of Tony in his zombie suit? I heard he made one in an interview.
- 4) Is Jason Vorhees a zombie?
- 5) Are you a zombie?
- 6) Can you give us your hard and fast zombie rules or do we need to learn them through the progression of the story?

I like the new black covers on the back too. They're good for preserving my fingerprints for posterity.

Love,

Chris Piers

Yeah... 28 Days Later... bring that up again. Ugh.

- 1) *Not at the moment, no. I seriously doubt this book will go on forever but at this point I’m plotted well into the future and I see no end. Think of it like a lifetime... Rick’s death is not planned, I don’t know when it will occur and I don’t even know if the book will end when it does occur. We’ll see... that’s part of the fun. So no, no planned ending at this time.*
- 2) *I’ve never really seen one that I absolutely hated. The Romero Films, Cemetery Man, Undead, Zombie... there’s a lot that stick out as favorites. You gotta mention Dead Alive too... that one’s a classic.*
- 3) *Yeah, if Tony can do one out for me, I’ll print it. Tony?*
- 4) *Technically... I think so.*
- 5) *Only on leap years.*
- 6) *You’ll pick them up as you go along... they’re all pretty straight forward, if people bug me, I may print them later.*

Just don’t commit any crimes with any of my comics left at the crime scene.

To whom it may concern,
First I would like to say I loved the first issue. I can't wait to keep reading this series. I would also like to say that I like black and white comics but I would love to see this one done in color (like the cover) If this doesn't happen than its cool with me. I understand the black and white gives it that vintage feel. Just wanted to give you my 2 cents. Thanks for a great comic book
sincerely Steve B

Yeah, the covers look nice but I think if the whole book looked like that they wouldn't be special. And while the covers look spectacular in color, I just don't think the sequentials would work as well with all that color fighting for your attention. Trust me, kids... black and white is for the better.

Mr. Kirkman and Mr. Moore,
I just wanted to tell you how excited I am to have discovered "The Walking Dead," and the seriousness and scope which you are clearly dedicating to it. I am a long-time fan of the Zombie genre, particularly the Romero films (especially "Dawn of the Dead") and Richard Matheson's "I Am Legend." Most of its excursions into comics, however, have been disappointing, even if only because they seem to mostly be mini-series and to focus solely on the "blood and guts" aspects. As pleased as I was with "Walking Dead" №1, I became even *more* excited when I got to the end and read Robert's "mission statement," about how this is intended as a long-term comic series, and that it will focus more on the "real" issues if such a nightmare were ever to actually occur: How will society adapt? WILL society adapt? How does one go about *living* in such an environment? Again, I simply wanted to thank you for the particular venture, and to assure that I, too, will be along for the long haul! Looking forward to issues №2 and №200! Sincerely,
Christopher Andrews

It's good to see that so many people out there in the world really wanted to see a book like this the way that I did. I think comics are the perfect medium for the zombie genre. Aside from television (and that would take too long) there really isn't another medium that can devote the time to following the story through to the end. It's nice not having to do a two hour story and then move on.

Hello there!!!

My wife says that I'm crazy, because I like horror movies and stuff like that, and when she saw the first issue of walking dead on my hands she confirmed that I'm crazy... Let me tell you that this first issue of the Walking dead is awesome!!! But something that I don't understand is why the disaster always happen when someone is at the hospital and when he wakes up suddenly the world as he knows it, is gone!!! I know is more scary that way, and maybe you'll tell us why and how this happened... in the meantime i just can only guess it... I like the main character is between

candid and fearless (I guess because he is a cop), and the scene of the dead(?) lady near the bicycle is great!!! Something that keeps bothering me is: How is that the rural area still has electricity (at the police station sequence)? but maybe you're going to answer that the generator is still running until it runs out of fuel... anyway it would sound unreal, but hey! it's only a comic book!!!

I have another question: How many issues of this great comics are you going to give us?

Please keep the great job you're doing with this comic.

read'ya in the next issue.

Cuauhtemoc Vazquez

Electricity? Magic dude... it's magic. As far as the waking up in a hospital thing... it worked in 28 Days Later... I figured it'd work here! Ugh. We plan on doing as many issues as we can... we'll see how many that ends up being hopefully many years from now.

Hello.

I really like your comic...a lot. I wasn't quite sure (assumptions about another mindless horror comic; though beautiful, I was afraid it would lack substance) until I read your letter to the reader editorial deal.

I love zombies - dawn of the dead-style zombies. Well, not the zombies themselves. I'm a window dresser in a mall in Orange County. I hate zombies. I love the foil that zombies provide for those truly living and the social commentary possible with use of zombie imagery. I just curated a zombie art show and am planning to have another.

Sorry, that wasn't the point of this. I'm zealous.

I just really liked your comic is all.

-Amber

I really like getting letters from girls. Glad you like the book, keep readin' and I'll keep writin.' Excelsior!

Hi there,
I reeeeaally love your comic. Obviously, I'm a zombie movie/comic fan. But I think "the Walking Dead" is currently at the top of the list of zombie comics, in my opinion. My only two critiques are: A) The name. I already have two other comics from the past with the exact same title. But that's all right. At least I knew what I was getting into when I saw the book on the shelf for the first time. Anything with "dead" in the title grabs my attention. So maybe that was your purpose. B) I agree that your comic should stay black and white. But I can't get over your comment about the zombies in "Dawn Of The Dead" looking cheesy because they were blue. Man oh man! That's my favorite movie of all-time, and I love the look of the

zombies. Not that they're particularly realistic (like in the sequel, "Day Of The Dead"). But to me, they define what horror movie "zombies" should look like. They look.... cool. But besides that, when it comes to comics, I enjoy the stark detail in the line work that's often over-shadowed, or covered up, by coloring. So I applaud you for keeping your book colorless. And I hope it stays that way. Now that the only two negatives are out of the way, I'll go ahead and tell you that you have succeeded in telling a story, thus far. As opposed to just gorey, cheap thrills that these sort of comics are usually based around. I love the gore too. But I think that proper story-telling will keep other readers interested, and not just us zombie-obsessed folks. Speaking of which, I've seen a number of zombie books get cancelled pretty quickly. I sincerely hope that doesn't happen here. I'll do all I can to keep it afloat. Of course, the extent of my comic publishing powers is simply to buy religiously and tell my friends about it. So that's what I'll do. One thing I could see happening is some sort of movie adaptation, what with the popularity of zombie flicks (Resident Evil, House Of The Dead, Dawn Of The Dead remake) rising. The silver screen would probably take kindly to a well thought out story like yours. I guess that's it. Oh yeah, what sort of music do you listen to? I'm in a couple of punk bands (Down By Law and Pseudo Heroes). Don't know if you're interested in that kind of stuff. But if so, let me know and I'll send a cd or two your way. One of the albums actually has a parody of a "Dawn of the Dead" movie poster as the cover. Seeya, Sam PS Could you let me know if you plan on putting this in the letters column?

A) Damn... really? Oops. Oh, well... too late now.

B) The zombies in Dawn of the Dead look bad... I mean... c'mon! The movie itself is amazing, make no mistake... and the gore effects at the end look good too, but that blue make-up looks AWFUL!

Free CD = free stuff... free stuff is always good. We've got a P.O. Box for a reason... lord knows nobody hand writes letters anymore.

PS I plan on putting this in the letters column.

Dear Letter Hacks:

Ok, first, I must know - I read Walking Dead, Invincible and Tech Jacket and even SuperPatriot from Mr. Kirkman. In all these books, there are letters by "Chris Piers". Is this a real person? I am guessing it is Mr. Kirkman creating the questions he would like to answer with a pen name. Am I right?

Ok, second. This is the best horror book ever! EVER! It does need some more violence, but otherwise it is off the charts, as they say. This Rick guy is gonna be a

badass one day, I just know it. And at the end of this issue (2) it looks like he will have a small army perhaps! Kill all the zombies! Kill them all!

Wow, Tony Moore is maybe the best artist in comics! He draws all these rotting guys and I showed my little

sister and she was like, "ugh, yuck!" and I thought it was funny but then my Dad saw what I did and he totally sent me to my room. It was worth it! He will still let me get the comics, don't worry, but he doesn't want me to frighten my sister. But she kinda deserved it because she once burned all my Magic cards, believe it or not.

Questions:

- 1) Will any superheroes be in this book? I think it is in another universe but I'm not too sure.
- 2) Does Tony Moore draw real people that he knows as zombies? If I was his friend, I would MAKE HIM do that!
- 3) How many issues will this go? I hope MANY.
- 4) Will you print my pinup if it is good and I mailed it to you guys?
- 5) Will you make a Walking Dead website? Videogame? Movie???
- 5) Will there be any other monsters?

Thanks for the awesome comic. I hope you print my letter. I bet my friend ten bucks Image will print it. Please help me win!

You guys are better than Resident Evil. You made me wet my pants a little during the first issue (I was able to hold most of it though so keep it up, it's a SCARY book!)

Your fan, Peter Camacho

No, sadly... Chris Piers is very real. Visit www.shortbusonline.com for some of the very funny work of mister Chris Piers... that guy is a hoot!

- 1) *Absolutely no superheroes ever. This is a totally different universe.*
- 2) *He does it sometimes... though I'VE certainly not appeared as a zombie yet... which kinda pisses me off. James Sime of Isotope fame appears in this very issue.*
- 3) *Many is definitely the plan. Don't know how many... I'd like to do at least fifty but I'd love to go beyond that.*
- 4) *Maybe... but don't mail the original, mail a photocopy. No promises though.*
- 5) *Too early to tell.*
- 5) *Nope... just zombies... and trust me... that's MORE than enough.*

With that I think I'll wrap up this edition of The Walking Dead letters column. We'll be back with more next month... I hope you join us then. Be sure to write those letters kids.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Is it the end of year already? Say what you will about all the historic events of 2020, but I think many years down the line, it will mostly be remembered for THE WALKING DEAD finally being printed in color, right? Hell froze over, Dave McCaig crawled from the icy crevice, and there you go. That's how comics get made. Sean here, wishing you all a healthy, happy holiday season. Also, you'll notice in the cover gallery that we've included TWD #3 original cover colors. Why? Because we mistakenly placed #2's cover on the back cover of #3... and we feel awful about it. Now let's see what the readers and Robert were talking about back in February 2004... including a letter from a Mackeiwcz?! WTF.

Sales are up, reviews are good, the book's moving along close to on schedule, and it's looking fantastic. Life is good. Issue five... man, it seems like just yesterday when we started working on this book, it really is true what they say about time flying. I hope you liked this issue, I think it's had the most action of any issue so far. It was certainly a lot of fun to write. If you didn't like it... there should eventually be a lot more so hopefully we'll make up for it at some point in the future.

Mail time!

Robert and Tony, Well, issue three was awesome. I liked the focus on the personal lives of the characters and as the cast grows I become more invested in the story. Tony Moore's art get more expressive every issue. I was introduced to The Walking Dead, along with Invincible and Brit through the letters column in Savage Dragon. I think that title does a great job of creating a community of readers with its letter column and a story that month to month entertains and pretty much stands alone. I see this same community being formed with The Walking Dead. The story has been fun so far and I'm excited for the next issue. By the way I heard Black and White is the new color! Cody Shelton

"Black and white is the new color." You, Cody, are a frickin' genius!! I'll be using that in the future.

Robert and Tony,

Let me just get this out of the way. This is the first time I have ever written into a letters column.

The sad part is the reason behind this letter. Yeah I love the book and all that shit that makes you feel warm and bloody, but shit man some of the people that write in to you really need to fucking get past their discrimination of black and white books. It is just an absence of color not an absence of talent or a great story. They need to go buy some crayons or something. As for the similarities to 28 Days Later, I say so fucking what. A guy wakes up in a hospital and there are zombies. End of similarities. I have been reading your shit ever since Battle Pope, as an Atheist who is totally devoid of any and all morals, I fell in love with your work. But after reading Battle Pope many times, too many times really, I almost started to view these god and Jesus characters in a more sympathetic light. I almost feel bad for not believing in them. Hell after reading The Walking Dead I may have to start worshipping Zombies. God speed to you man God speed! Love ya always.

Thomas Mackeiwcz

Um... right back at you... Thomas. If the lack of color is keeping people from buying this book, that's really unfortunate. With manga, and Sin City, and all the BILLIONS of quality black and white titles out there (like BATTLE POPE) it's a shame that people have to miss out on that. It's really their loss. Because... you know... black and white is the new color.

Dear Messrs Kirkman and Moore,

I purchased the first issue of the Walking Dead knowing nothing about it - really because I'm devoted to the Zombie genre, and compelled to sample everything in it. I quite enjoyed the artwork very much, I hadn't seen anything by Mr. Moore previously, but I'll be sure to keep an eye out for his work in the future.

I was disappointed, though, with the extremely slow pace and obvious story devices. The story, such as it was, consisted mostly of the main character wandering around a ruined city (lovingly depicted though it was) and then having the backstory explained to him. More disconcerting, though, was Rick's physical state throughout the story. He'd presumably been in the coma for well over a month, and while he spends a few panels leaning on walls, he's able to run around and fight for his life incredibly quickly. Then there's the whole question of who was watering him after the hospital was abandoned - the I.V. bag even seemed half-full. It

ended well, though, with a clear goal being set for the character.

Despite my reservations, I decided to pick up the second issues, so I could get a sense of where the story was headed. Again, the book was fraught with pacing problems. In a twenty-two page book, there were only three real events: 1. He gets a horse. 2. He arrives in Atlanta, and is attacked. 3. A stranger leads him to his family. The length seemed padded out, with a rather odd speech dropped in to presumably strengthen the audience's understanding of Rick's bond with his family. The speech seems false, though, because the audience naturally assumes that a father loves his family - and the story wasn't anything we haven't heard dozens of times before.

I was also bothered by the continuing lack of logic and continuity errors - maybe Rick isn't supposed to be the smartest man in the world, but why would he walk into a strange house without a gun ready? The presumable lack of strength he should be suffering from kept bothering me as well, with him running, riding, and fighting with ease, despite his presumable lack of health. Then there's the big one - if the government made some effort to protect the city, where is the evidence of it? The blockaded roads, the army vehicles - piles of corpses by the side of the road? Then, by the end of the issue, Rick had already found his family - while it's always nice to get a happy ending, the search really didn't seem like much trouble, and by finishing the issue with the happy family reunion, you've got something that feels like a definite ending. What's the impetus for the average reader to go out and by the next issue?

I haven't decided yet whether I'll continue reading the book, I just wanted to drop you this note to suggest a few things that might be improved in the future. Might I ask - is there an editor working on the book? I didn't see one on the credits page, and it seems like the problems I'm pointing out (pacing, logic) are normally the kind of thing a skilled script editor would be able to handle.

Good luck with the series,

Daniel Weissenberger

P.S. - I wouldn't be too mad at 28 Days Later (A film I did NOT love) were I you - after all, they stole their opening from 'Day of The Triffids'

Yeah, I'd never heard of "Day of the Triffids" until people started writing in about it. I'm going to have to pick that up. As far as Rick's lack of strength (or lack of lack) there comes a time with accuracy versus entertainment value comes into play. Rick would have had a catheter in his urethra that couldn't be removed without medical assistance, but rather than deal with that and spend pages explaining how he got it out... I just ignored it. Is it inaccurate? Yep. Who's to say how much time passed between panels in those first few pages of issue #1? Rick

could have sat there by his bed for days, moving his legs around and trying to build up the strength to walk... I could have shown that... but that would have sucked. So instead I had him stumbling around and falling over... figuring that would be enough. As far as the IV thing goes... anyone with half a brain knows that that little bag lasts at least six months. They developed that technology for coma patients in the sixties. You'll notice the tank in issue #4, the reason that we didn't see that stuff in issue #2 is that he didn't get far enough into the city. About Rick finding his family? I suck. It's as simple as that. Next letter.

Hi.

I'm not sure how I decided to start reading TWD. I used to watch horror movies and read horror novels when I was younger, but I guess my tastes changed over the years and I came to find them to be both tediously predictable and generally unpleasant (OK, the latter quality is not unreasonable for the horror genre, but it had lost its frisson for me). This was what caused me to pass over No1, I think; it caught my eye in Previews, being somewhat different from Image's typical fare (the only Image title I read is Powers), but the zombie scenario produced a knee-jerk rejection reaction. Browsing the synopsis for No2 I started to get an impression that this was more a character-driven story, with the zombies as the "McGuffin" to trigger subsequent events and developments, rather than a mindless splatter-fest, so I decided to start putting it on advance order, and got No1 on back-order.

Because of the lead-time on orders I've only read as far as No3 (although I've read the synopses for No4-6 in Previews), but I have not regretted my decision. The story is developing well, with interesting plot possibilities and character developments, and it doesn't present the reader with the depressing chore of ploughing through a welter of intestines and exploding heads; the monochromatic format helping to make the occasional gruesomeness somewhat less distressing for us more sensitive souls (Garth Ennis' Punisher series is generally about the limit of my violence tolerance).

I like the idea of not knowing at the start what's caused it all. I'm hoping that it will take quite some time for Rick to discover the truth, piecing together bits of the story as his band of survivors travel around; this detective story being one of the developing plot threads. Although I suppose that the options are some combination of natural/unnatural and terrestrial/extra-terrestrial, that still leaves plenty of room for surprises.

There was the problem with the electricity supply, for which your explanation wasn't entirely satisfactory, but there is another possibly more significant "logical discontinuity" for which I haven't yet seen an explanation, and as it's been troubling

me since the first issue I thought that I'd raise it as a query. Either I'm missing something that's obvious to everyone else, or you've got a really clever explanation planned, or "we have a problem".

From the start in the hospital (harking back to John Wyndham's 1950s SF novel "The Day of the Triffids" - sans zombies, of course) and the degree of dereliction outside, plus the growth of weeds, and details of elapsed time mentioned in later issues, it would seem that Rick was in an unattended coma for at least three weeks (although the dilapidation of many of the buildings would seem to indicate a much longer time scale, an interval of one month is mentioned in №2). How did he survive? His IV would have run out quite quickly, so he wouldn't even have been getting liquids, which would have proved fatal after - what? - a few days? Instead, apart from being a bit wobbly to start with, he's not only alive but reasonably fit as well. It's a tricky one, that.

Having pondered this for some time I came up with one radical explanation which, if it's correct, probably means you can't print my letter, but if it's not you might print it and I'll end up looking a doofus. The answer is that he couldn't survive - and didn't. That he's infected with the same disease as the zombies, but as he was in a coma at the time he contracted it his mind wasn't affected (the details get a bit hazy here as to why). One supporting fact for this wild hypothesis is the IV wound on his hand, which his wife notices in №3. Why (from your point of view) point out this minor fact (unless just to add verisimilitude to Lori's reactions)? Is this going to heal? If not, then I rest my case. If so, then I deny all responsibility for this missive and blame it all on my evil twin brother.

Cheerio.

Another Fine Product from:
Jim Grimwood, Weardale, England

Dude, everyone knows that ever since world war two those IV liquids have been treated with voodoo magic that made them last for over thirteen months. You people are starting to make me think that none of you have ever read a text book. This book is TRUE TO LIFE, simple as that. If it happens here... it could happen in real life, whether you think it can or not. That's just something you people are going to have to deal with if you're going to keep reading this book.

Dear Rob and Tony,

Okay, okay, okay. So after somehow passing this by in Previews and then only to hear from every horror/comic fan under the sun about how great this title is, I finally managed to track down the first three issues. By the way, that's thanks to the fine folks at khepri.com. Great site, gang! Buy some stuff off 'em so maybe I'll get some kinda discount. ;)

Sometimes, when a book/movie/CD/etc. gets hyped this much, I panic because it usually fails to live up to the expectations. Thank God, then, for The Walking Dead, which actually exceeds said expectations! Unlike many of the readers from the letters pages, I'm not very familiar with either of your past work. I read the free issue of Battle Pope (which I loved) from Free Comic Book Day, but that's it. Sorry.

I'm a huge horror/zombie fan, although I like Romero *and* Fulci, so take that as you will. TWD feels like a great movie or even HBO show. There are so many details just in the first trio alone that suggest at the very least 50 amazing issues. Plus, man alive, Rob, do you know how to throw in some twists or what?! I honestly thought Rick wouldn't find his wife and kid until well into the series' run. But this discovery works because it opens up a whole can of worms and maggots for those 50 or more issues I just talked about. Reading the issues, I began guessing how these characters will interact and possibly clash as the series progresses. Jesus, man, do you know how long it's been since early issues have made me do that? Actually, I don't either, so take that as a compliment.

Don't feel left out, Tony. Your art here is simply fabulous. The full-page scene in issue 3 of Rick waking up and hugging his family? Heartbreaking. And even though this isn't supposed to be a book solely about zombies, Tony's rendition of the nasty buggers sure fooled me. If Romero ever does get around to that fourth Dead movie, he may want to contact Tony about some design work.

Sorry to get hyper, gang, but I haven't felt such joy and admiration at reading a comic since I first stumbled on to The Goon. Horror fans thank you, guys, and so should the comic fans.

One gripe, though: for all the supposed Romero fans who write in, why am I the only one who seemed to get a chuckle that Morgan Jones' son was named Duane? (Of course, I haven't read the fourth issue yet, so maybe somebody else picked up on that.)

Anyway, until Danny Boyle sues for copyright infringement, make mine Walking Dead. (Kidding about the 28 Days thing, gang. Please put down the knives. Please!)

Jeremy Ritter

HBO, huh? Somebody get those bastards on the phone!

And with that I'll bring this issue's letters column to a close. This thing was long as hell... and to be honest... I'm a little tired. So no witty sign off this issue. See you next month for another zombie-filled issues. It's MMM MMM good.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Sean here, welcoming you to our first issue of 2021, as we wrap up the monumental first arc of TWD and Tony Moore's final issue as series artist. The closing moments of this issue still hit just as hard as when I first read them many, many, many years ago. Don't forget—this series will stay publishing two issues every month, all year long... with lots of big first appearances of fan-favorite characters coming directly. Now, letters from people who I hope are still alive...

I realize I'm starting to sound like a broken record but as I type this I just found out today that our sales for issue #7 shot up another 2000 copies. That's just unheard of in today's market, especially for a black and white book... so thanks for the continued support people. We really appreciate it.

Speaking of appreciating I'd like to take this time to thank Cliff Rathburn for coming in at the last minute and pitching in on the gray tones for this issue. Thanks, Cliff... you did a swell job!!

Now, onto the mail.

Misters Moore and Kirkman, On a Wednesday at the Isotope I'm always busy as fucking hell, I spend every minute of my day entertaining a big group of crazy-cool customers, talking comics, and (of course) pimping comic books. Don't get me wrong, Wednesdays are my favorite day of the week, I really love the high energy crowd and the manic party atmosphere that we have every week, but I rarely get a chance to check out the latest wares until the doors are locked and the lights are off. But with WALKING DEAD №4 in the store you know I had to take some time out of my day to read that sucker, and good lord can you imagine my shock to see my dead and rotting self laying there in a big pile of bodies?!? Now I certainly consider it quite an honor to be dead in one of my favorite books and you know it absolutely made my day! You guys are just too good to me. So I thought I'd also take a little more time out of my Wednesday to say thanks for the great surprise... and for making such a kick ass comic book. Keep up the terrific work! James Sime Isotope - the comic book lounge San Francisco <http://www.isotopecomics.com>

James Sime, ladies and gentlemen! James, you were one of the first people I spotted that were talking this book

up and I can't help but think you've had a hand in its success. So to thank you... I got Tony to draw you all dead and rotting. It was his idea to have your guts all hanging out though... so thank him for that. Keep up the good work, man... it's good to know that people are out there busting their ass to sell these things.

Hey guys-

I've never written to a comic book before, but after reading the letter column to issue 4, I realized you guys are missing an essential part of the typical letter column. So, here goes...

"Man, I hate this book! You guys suck! You're ruining Rick's life, not to mention Lori's! I can't believe Image is allowing you guys to breathe, let alone publish! Eat \$№*№ and die, mother№)~№@&^s!"

Ok, now that you've gotten a negative letter, everything'll work out fine!

Seriously, love the book! I'm a Manager of a comic book store (Golden Apple II in Northridge) and I have been promoting your book shamelessly since №!! Just wondering if you guys ever make it to Southern Cali? If so, I would LOVE to have you at my shop for a signing! Maybe the San Diego Con (or Wizard's Long Beach shin-dig in March)?

Well, keep up the good work and, hey, one other thing:

If Image ever asks you to do a variant cover (or a holofoil, or a red foil, or a...well, you get the picture), use that ax Rick carries around and start chopping!

Sincerely,

Warren Jaycox

I hate variants. If I can help it... I hope to never do a book that has variant covers. It just bugs me having different looking copies of the SAME book... but that's just me. So no worries on the variant cover thing. If I'm ever in California again, I'll look you up. I'd personally love to do a signing. Might even drag Tony along if he behaves. Keep in touch, and thanks for the support. Oh, and I printed a negative letter in issue #5, so your email really just hurts my feelings, asshole.

Robert & Tony,
I just had the pure enjoyment of reading Walking Dead 1-3(Nº4 is waiting in my hold box at the comic store). I don't think there has been a better comic in this genre in a long time. There have been quite a few "horror" comics coming out in the last two years, but nothing this well written or this well drawn. This is the best thing Image has released since Midnight Nation. In a way, it makes me nostalgic for the days when Vince Locke was doing Dead World, it gives me that excited(I feel like I'm fourteen again) feeling every time a new issue comes out. Do you remember Dead World?

I hope I'm reading this comic for a long, long time! Keep up the great work and I'll keep telling my customers at the comic store that they need this comic more than food, air, & water.

Thanks for not letting a zombie fan down.
David Richardson

I think I'm going to start running a FAQ section at the top of every letters column that says "Dead World and Max Brooks, Zombie Survival Guide have been purchased thanks to recommendations in letter hacks, but the creators have yet to find time to read them." I got some Dead World stuff on Ebay and I'll try to get to it soon. It's just... I've got issues of X-Men to read, people!!

Hi

Wow is all I can say about The Walking Dead. This is one of the best comics out there. Robert catches the mood of the great Zombie movies perfectly. I'm really waiting to see the confrontation between Rick and Shane me thinks one of the Walking Dead.

Great Stuff Great Job
Paul Abblitt.

What makes you think there's a confrontation coming up between Shane and Rick? I'll tell you right now... NEVER GOING TO HAPPEN. Those guys are FRIENDS. Haven't you been paying attention?

My friend Mike turned me on to your book and boy am I glad he did. It's been a good 5 years since I have found myself enthralled with a title enough that I actually visit my local comic store and nag them if the next issue is in yet. I just got finished reading number 4 and you have treated the genre of zombie stories better than any one else I have seen in print. I have enjoyed how the story has evolved and that you have left the reader in the dark as to the origins of the zombie plague just as the main character Rick is.

As a fan of the Romero trilogy, I always felt that the zombies were incidental to the story and the real

power of the tale was how ordinary people react to mortal danger and the collapse of society as they know it. I'm very interested to see how the band of survivors at the camp react when they realize that help isn't coming, and that traditional morality has no role in the world that they find themselves in.

Keep up the good work.

p.s. I love the nod to Duane Jones (the name of the actor who played Ben in the original Night of the Living Dead, may he rest in peace.) in issue Nº1, keep the fan boy references coming!

Eric R. Weiss

Heh... fan boy references will be slipped in as much as I can. I'm trying to keep you guys happy. I'm glad you like my approach, Eric. I really respect zombie horror as a genre and I'm just out to do the most interesting tale I can no matter what. I hope most of you didn't notice but this issue has NO zombies in it. That's going to happen from time to time (not too often though, so don't worry). "The Walking Dead" does NOT refer to the zombies in this book.

Walking

Dear Robert & Tony--

I just got issue Nº4 a couple of days ago, and have probably read it seven or eight times since.

I have to say, with this issue your title has gone from being a comic I'm thrilled reading, as something bursting with promise, to a title that is really starting to deliver on that promise. And when it gets to showing your cards in a story, delivering on the promise you've made when you say, "Come here, I have a story to tell," that's usually when things get disappointing...

I almost don't know where to start... On the zombie side, I love the addition to the lore (which you thankfully seem to be following pretty closely according to the Philadelphia model) this issue brings. I, myself, have wondered what keeps zombies from attacking each other willy-nilly, unerringly honing in on the living. I found your answer very satisfying, but I found your use of it fucking stunning. The half-splash of the zombies jammed up against the tank was thrilling, and getting to move among a throng of the undead with our heroes, undetected, was all the things you want from a horror experience: creepy, exciting, nerve-wracking. The thing is, those of us who love the zombies are very familiar with the tropes: flesh eating, the mob, artillery, infection and half-measures, the transfiguration of those closest to us into brainless monsters... all that. But that walk through zombie infested Atlanta felt like something I'd never seen before, and it was really exciting.

And that's secondary to what I'm enjoying most in *The Walking Dead*, which is the human drama -- watching our heroes deal emotionally and practically to a world that's been overrun, hostile and desolate. A world which, I might add, is easier and easier to imagine coming to be with each passing year. I was very enthusiastic to read your manifesto about the title's intended goals. It put me in mind of some of my favorite Japanese comics, where the story unfolds slowly, accruing character as it goes, almost closer to the pace of life than a novel, even. I think you're succeeding quite well there, and I thank you for it.

I also think you're getting the mix of drama to action just right. Good job.

I have a technical question for Tony. Do you do your "coloring" with a computer? Or are you working the greys more traditionally, by hand and stuff?

Greyscale comics generally aren't my thing, I like stark black and white or lush colors. But I agree with you guys, black and white, in the more cinematic palette, is absolutely appropriate for this. Heightens it, in fact. Maybe because we associate black and white photography with an era before modern special effects, and of course contemporary films inform our take on visual entertainments across mediums. So, black and white equals more real, somehow. Just a little theory I'm working up, I don't know. Without question it's great for the compositions. Obviously you're changing my thinking about this comics-in-greys situation. I love your drawing style, by the way. I aspire to developing something similar. Great zombies, too.

Oh, one last thing. Rick's family is alive. *And* he found 'em. I wasn't expecting that angle. Boy, how's about having something to lose, right? Great stuff. Issue №4's "terrible revelation" at the end is not about cars going over cliffs, nor our heroes surrounded (no, you gave us that with the peek at Issue №5's cover -- dizzy with anticipation, here), but more devastating, in fact. The human drama. Fantastic.

Keep up the good work, sirs. Here's to a long, interesting run.

Thanks again,
Andrew Garcia-Price

Letters like these make it all worthwhile. We sit in our rooms all alone doing the best work we can, hoping people get it... and to find that you (and most people) are responding to this book so favorably is really something special. I can't thank you (and guys like you) enough. You rock. Tony does the tones on the computer, it's all done in Photoshop.

Hey I just wanted to take a minute to write and say what an excellent book y'all have. As of late there are a lot more horror comics on the rack and

you guys have managed to put out one of the best. The story and the art are always great. The story is well developed as well as the characters, which is sometimes difficult in any zombie story, 'cause unlike other monsters zombies don't have any character traits like vampires and werewolves, they're kinda like a force of nature if you will. So you have to really invest in and like the characters to keep interested with the story, even though some characters are pretty much zombie food. Moving on to the art, Tony gives stark and vivid images that are gorgeous (please keep it black and white). The attention to detail on the zombies is hardcore and should make any horror fan happy. Overall you have one of the best books on the market not just in horror comics but comics in general.

Thanks and keep up the good work,
Matthew G.

Didn't you hear? Black and White is the new color! We're at the front of a craze wave that's going to be sweeping the world by storm. Black and White 4-ever!!

Walking Dead staff,

Just wanted to say that I am really enjoying *The Walking Dead*. I hadn't bought a comic book in probably 5 years. I stopped in a store the other day just to browse. It was there that I saw *The Walking Dead*, Issue №1. Being a huge fan of Romero's zombie trilogy (esp. *Dawn*) as well as *28 Days and Zombi*, I was curious. I gotta say, you guys have really done an excellent job with the book. I was able to find Issue 3 in another store. I've seen №'s 2 and 4 on Ebay. Looking forward to picking them up as well. Keep up the great work and story. Being a zombie fan myself, there are so few quality zombie products out there, be it movies, books, etc. I truly hope this is a long lasting series.

Thanks,
Dave

With sales figures what they are I can guarantee we'll be around for a while. Oh, and, Dave... we almost went an ENTIRE letters column without mentioning 28 Days Later and then you had to go fuck that up. Thanks, man! At least it wasn't in reference to the opening scene of issue #1... that at least, is a step in the right direction.

And with that I bring another massive letters column to a close. Thanks for writing in, people. You know everyone here at THE WALKING DEAD central loves you. Keep sending that email!!

See you next month.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hey, everyone! Robert Kirkman here! I wanted to talk a little about this issue because this is the introduction of CHARLIE ADLARD to the series. It's odd to me, looking back now, that there are these six issues to kick the series off that Charlie wasn't there for. From where I sit now, they're the oddball issues that just don't fit and the series really gets going starting with this issue.

That was NOT the common view at the time. When this issue shipped roughly 86% of the series had been drawn by Tony Moore. As we sit here now, after the completion of 193 issues, Tony drew roughly 3% of the series. It was only natural for people at the time to be a little upset over the art change. Now, we all agree Charlie is the definitive artist on the series.

Losing Tony on this series was extremely upsetting to me at the time. I first met Tony in the 7th grade and for a time he was my closest friend in the world. We started our comic careers together on BATTLE POPE, a book that totally still reads well in modern times (sarcasm). I knew going into this series I'd probably have to replace him. It had happened on BATTLE POPE, and Tony always struggled to produce regular work. All his post-WALKING DEAD work has featured regular fill-ins to keep the books going. I had hoped the subject matter would keep Tony's enthusiasm up so that he could keep up with the schedule, but that was probably unreasonable of me and, quite frankly, unfair to Tony.

In hindsight I can see how my desire for this series to be long-running and consistently monthly didn't mesh well with Tony's working style. I took the risk because I was pretty sure the book would be cancelled by issue #6. I wish it would have been possible at the time to pick a shorter project, not meant to run monthly, to do with Tony and done WALKING DEAD with Charlie Adlard from the start. Then maybe Tony and I would still be working together today in some capacity.

All that said, all three of our lives have been drastically changed for the better by our involvement, large or small, in this series. So if I had a magic lamp, I wouldn't change a thing.

While Tony's art on TWD seems out of place to me after Charlie made his mark on the book, the fact remains that Tony's work on this series is absolutely stunning, and laid the foundation that led to the massive jumps in sales that started happening on a monthly basis with this issue.

I genuinely miss working with Tony Moore, he was an essential part of my early days in comics, we

collaborated on BATTLE POPE, BRIT, this series, and he was sharing a studio with Cory Walker and I when we created INVINCIBLE. He was a huge part of my life. I hope one day it will be possible for us to work together again. I'm always jealous when I see him coming back to comics to do an issue of Thor or some other special project. And I'm always first in line to purchase those projects.

If you miss Tony Moore as much as I do, be sure to visit www.coloneltonymoore.com to support my fellow Kentucky Colonel and see what he's up to these days. He recently directed a music video, which is quite cool and very impressive. Between that and his work in MAD Magazine, it really warms my heart to know my old friend is living his dreams.

With this issue, we begin the long, endlessly impressive run of Charlie Adlard on this series. Tyreese, Hershel, Maggie, Michonne, The Governor, Abraham, Negan, Ezekiel, Jesus, Alpha, Beta, Mercer, Princess and so many more characters who come to define this series await us under his awesome pen! So whether you're enjoying this as a nostalgic exploration of a series you love or experiencing it for the first time, there's a whole lot of coolness in store for you in the months and years ahead!

Now I'll turn things over to the esteemed Sean Mackiewicz!

HELLO! Before we dive into a bag of dusty, old letters... well, we'll get to that, but FIRST we're going to serve up the first new Letter Hacks since June 2019, back when some crazy stuff happened in the pages of THE WALKING DEAD comic book series AND you also thought there would be a lot of issues to read for many, many more years. Well... not quite.

But, in seeing your enthusiasm for this new colorized, definitive presentation, we wanted to bring back this dearly beloved letter column in some fashion. Most likely we'll do this every six issues or so for a mega dose of letters, getting feedback from new readers, old favorites, and those that missed out writing a letter considered worthy enough to run in the original series. We'll be keeping spoilers to a minimum for you first timers (...maybe?), and what better way to start off a letters page than with someone who can be described as both an old favorite AND a least favorite!

Rob, Tony, Dave,

So--TWDD! I realize now what I missed out on all

these years; you see, I didn't really follow/ collect/ come to love TWD till around issue №22 or so. So all these early issues--except one; issue №1--are completely new to me. And I'm loving it!

Wait... you NEVER read 20 issues of TWD until now? You still have 13 more completely-new-to-you issues? Perhaps the most surprising thing in 2020. I'm reeling...

Everything old is new again. Say...come to think of it...What about doing the (fairly) obvious, and do an Invincible Deluxe?! I hear there's an Invincible show coming soon (somewhere)...and I for one didn't read most of the early issues of that either. Might be good advertising?

Cheers,
Andrew J. Shaw

INVINCIBLE is already THE BEST SUPERHERO COMIC IN THE UNIVERSE, how can we make it any better?

If I ever get really mad at Sean, we'll do INVINCIBLE DELUXE and maybe even do it WEEKLY instead of twice a month. Then I'd get to sit back and watch his hair turn gray in real time. Either that, or he would just quit, and then I'd be completely lost... so... well...

...

We're holding off on INVINCIBLE DELUXE for the foreseeable future. Besides, that series is already in color!

Hi Walking Dead Deluxe Team!

Four issues in and loving the new format. But one thing that is just blowing me away are the new covers. Each artist's take is a cool depiction of the pages to come and it's great to see TWD with a fresh look.

But it's Arthur Adam's work I want to give props here. I love his Issue 4 cover with a frightened young Andrea because later in the series she is nothing but rock-solid confidence. The connecting walkers across the top make me want to hurl my lunch (a good thing) and the brooding Shane with Laurie's turned back sums up the last page of the book perfectly.

Art Adams is THE BEST. We've worked with Art on TWD covers in the past, such as "The Whisperer War" connecting covers, but this series of covers may surpass their brilliance when they're all finished many, many years from now, under the guidance of a future TWDD editor to be named later!

So Robert, got a few questions about cover art.

1) After countless variant covers, do you ever give direction to cover artists based on their particular strengths or just give them complete creative license?

Honestly, it's more or less complete creative license. The issues are drawn, these artists can read them and decide what's a cool image to draw. In Art's case, we just tell him what character to feature. His covers are meant to commemorate (more or less) first appearances of important characters. From there he works his magic. For Julian Totino Tedesco, he's commemorating big moments from the series. So for issue #1 I just said, "Rick's encounter with Bicycle Girl" and he worked his magic. The esteemed David Finch is doing covers for every single issue. For that, I want him to remain engaged and excited about what he's doing, so he's being told to look at the issue and draw whatever excites him most. They're all doing absolutely amazing work. Paired with Dave McCaig, it's a really stunning lineup. For Charlie's first six issues covers, I asked him to do an interconnected piece (can you tell I love connected covers yet?) that allows him to draw a montage of the stories Tony handled in the first six issues. As the series progresses, I might have more people come in and do six part covers for various arcs because I think that's cool.

2) Any chance that Walking Dead will do another Hero Initiative? I have 6 of the original TWD Hero covers and would be totally stoked to see another run for Walking Dead Deluxe.

No plans right now, but you never know. I'd certainly be open to it. It's a good cause we should all support.

3) What is the chance we will see YOU do cover art, maybe for landmark issues like TWD 19 or 100? Would love to see that!!!

I don't think you would...

Happy Holidays to you and the rest of the Skybound peeps!

Tom McElroy
Austin, TX

Thank you for doing The Walking Dead: Deluxe and having one of the few bright spots of the year that has been the dumpster fire called '2020'. I got into TWD late; everyone for years bugged me to watch the show and when I finally did and the opening title cards said it was based on the series of graphic novels, I knew I needed to go to the OG source for the content.

Compendiums 1 and 2 I blitzed through so quickly along with Compendium 3 that had only just dropped, I then switched to chipping along month-by-month as the series continued on and what a ride

it was when I quickly caught up and then overtook the show

I now look forward to my issues arriving with my standing order at my comic shop (here's looking at the crew at The Comic Shop* in Liverpool, NSW) and following the story as it progresses how it was meant to be in a serial format and in glorious colour, along with the behind the scenes Cutting Room Floor and the notes on how each issue came about. I missed out on getting each issue the first time around and I didn't want to have the same happen again

To veteran readers welcome back - you know what awaits us,

To new readers, tie up your boots and grab your pack and gun, it's time to hit the road that will go fortnightly until October 2028

Bring it on.

Chris
The Far Side of the World
Penrith, NSW, Australia

Great to hear we've got support from all the way over in Australia, Chris! We're in this for the long haul and it's great to know you're along for the ride.

To be completely honest, I had a fairly cynical reaction when I first learned that the entire series was going to be re-released in color. It was something along the lines of "well that's sure a creative way to milk a retired franchise for one last big cash grab."

I had the same thought!

That was not my intention!

But then I still picked up the first issue anyway, and I realized just how much I was wrong. I never realized how much new life a little color could breathe into a familiar story. Bravo for taking the series in this beautiful artistic direction! Although I must say I cringe to imagine how much more gruesome a few of the upcoming scenes will be, with bright red gore splashed across the pages and whatnot (I'm thinking of Michonne's **REDACTED** and Glenn's **ALSO REDACTED**, specifically).

Having seen those in color since Dave McCaig is working well into the future, yeah, you'll definitely be feeling something weirder in the pit of your stomach.

Maybe we should call this THE WALKING DEAD: INTENSIFIED.

It's also been a novel experience to enjoy the earlier

parts of the story one issue at a time. It was just prior to the whisperers' introduction that I got caught up enough on the original run to start collecting single issues. My experience with the story up to that point had been in marathon binges. So it's been quite nice to take it more slowly and savor it bit by bit, and it's fun to imagine what it must have felt like to be one of the fans from the very beginning.

Scott Erickson
Olympia, WA

I've never considered 'til now how, overwhelmingly so, most readers have binged this series—whether compendiums or torrents—compared to those who followed the mostly monthly publication of the series. It still reads exceedingly well in single issues, folks!

That was the hope, really, with this series. That's why we're NOT collecting the series in this form. Single issues only. Slowing things down and building an audience who reads it month to month with tons of backmatter analyzing what went into the making of the book. I figured it would be a fun ride for fans new and old. Seems to be working out so far!

Let's get it on. So in Walking Dead Deluxe №3 you say you came up with the idea of Rick waking up in the hospital. Now this was around the same time that 28 Days Later came out which obviously has the same beginning so I wanted to find out if you'd seen the movie or if you had not, what was your reaction when you did. Maybe this has been covered before ad infinitum but I've never heard it discussed, and if it is a coincidence it's a pretty fucking big one. What are the odds that the comic and film which recharge the zombie genre and transform it into the unstoppable behemoth it's become both start the same way? 28 Days doesn't seem to get as much credit anymore but they really gave us "fast" zombies (and let's just skip the "they're not zombies they're infected" argument please) for the first time and with another TV series it doesn't seem like TWD is going away soon, so I'm interested to see if they're connected in any way. All the best

Jake Ohlhausen
"Rockin" Milpitas, CA
Home of Black Cat comics the best in the biz!

Didn't we cover this in the CLASSIC letters column, Sean?

The short version is it's a complete coincidence. The first issue was well into being DRAWN when I first saw the trailer for 28 Days Later. It wasn't 100% clear, but it seemed to set up someone waking up from a coma to a zombie apocalypse, so I got worried and for the only time in my life I torrented the movie. It had been released in the UK already, so it was available

to download on some pirate sites. I watched it and honestly it was so different from TWD (and totally awesome), I didn't feel the need to try and rewrite and get issue #1 redrawn before the release, so we just left it as is. Since the TV show hit... we get this question less and less, but I promise you, coincidence.

Hello Walking Dead Gang,

I am a long time fan up here in the great white north (Canada), well Toronto so not so north but close enough!

My first Walking Dead experience was with the TV adaptation which I have come to love dearly, and watch religiously. I started from scratch as Season 3 was airing and became instantly hooked.

This led me to the comics. Here is where my love for the show became a passion for the universe itself. I started with compendium 1 and 2 and then collected the issues.

I absolutely loved the B&W originals. It leaves something to the imagination. But with the re-release of every issue in colour I am beyond excited. Waiting for Negan to show up AGAIN has me marking the calendar for each release date.

Coming December 4, 2024, folks! Schedule that in your calendar now!

Where I was unable to collect every issue (I am still trying diligently) of the original B&W releases, I am certainly going to be grabbing each issue in colour. And not to mention all of the different cover variants, I am becoming a menace to my local comic shop asking about them.

I just want to say that Julian Totino Tedesco has been a longtime favorite since doing some Wizard World variants, and it's so great to be working with him again.

Lastly, I need to know. The surprise release of Negan Lives gave us a glimpse, maybe even a hope of more to come. I think I speak for all Walking Dead fans when I say we need to know what happens next!

Later,
Andrew Humenik

Well... if you ever know what happens "next", it'll be a long, long time! Sorry to say!

Kirkman and crew,

I'm so excited to have another chance at making it into the letter hacks! I was so bummed out when the

series ended and I never made it in but finally I get another chance!

Anyways on to my question, I know that you've mentioned multiple times that **REDACTED FOR BEING A HUGE SPOILER, WHAT'RE YOU THINKING, CASON JONES?!?!?**

Side question, have you ever thought about some of the characters birthdays? I know it's a small detail but I've always loved sharing a birthday with some of my favorite characters from other series. It would be really cool if Ricks birthday was September 8th... wink wink.

Thanks for all that y'all do! So glad to have the series back again! I have sorely missed having the comic universe in my life.

Cason Jones
Sulphur Springs, Texas

Maybe it's because I'm a bad writer, but I've always considered that level of specificity tedious and unnecessary. Unless there's a story reason for a character to have a birthday, they don't really have them in my series. And I try to never nail down exactly when things are happening so that the stories seem as timeless as possible. Birthdays would make that harder to do.

Did THE WALKING DEAD #1 take place in 2003 when it came out, or 2020 when the deluxe edition came out? There's not a lot of cell phones to date it... so it's vague enough that for now at least... it's kind of timeless.

Hi Robert

Long time reader and Collector
I'm so glad the series is getting a fresh lick of paint and I might be able to get into the letter hacks now,

You did it! You finally did it!

I was also missing getting the Comics in the mail every month when the series ended this gives me something to look forward too, The art looks better than ever and I can't wait to see this journey again and after seeing Tony's work in color I'm super excited to see Charlie's, Will the Negan Shorts and Other character Specials also get this treatment? I think that'd be fun, I'm also so happy we finally get to see the infamous Cutting Room Floor. As for the TV Show the Commonwealth soldiers looked insanely good, Can't wait to see more of them.

PS Invincible TV show looks incredible!

Danny White
Ilkeston
Derbyshire, United Kingdom

Yes, Dave will be recoloring EVERY TWD comic, but don't expect to see those stories you mentioned any time soon.

But eventually we will! The plan is for Dave McCaig to color every stitch of THE WALKING DEAD.

OK, folks, this was fun! Keep sending in your letters, and we'll do this again in a couple months! In the meantime, happy new year, we have a SUPER exciting year planned here at Skybound, with tons of new comics and special surprises. Take care! And keep reading for those vintage hacks.

-Sean Mackiewicz

What Sean said! Begone 2020! Never to be heard from again! 2021... be a better year! Please, oh, lord please... don't be somehow worse! Skybound-wise... we've definitely got nothing but awesome stuff on the way. ULTRAMEGA by James Harren! Look for it in March! And that's only the tip of the iceberg!

-Robert Kirkman

Welcome to issue #7, the beginning of the next big arc in THE WALKING DEAD epic. The Days Gone Bye TPB collecting issues #1-6 should be on shelves the same day as this very issue, so hopefully some of you are new to this book and I'd like to say WELCOME ABOARD! We've got a lot of cool stuff planned here at THE WALKING DEAD Central and I think anyone that's a fan of zombie movies of any kind will like what we've got in store.

Now, I'm sure most of you have noticed a bit of a change in this issue... more specifically in the art department. That's right, guys... regular artist Tony Moore has gone on to greener pastures and won't be lending his ultra talents to this book anymore. He'll still be on covers for the time being, but he won't be contributing to the insides of the books from here on out. I'm sorry to see Tony go, but I'm sure you'll all agree that the book is in more than capable hands.

Speaking of which, let's all give Charlie Adlard and Cliff Rathburn a warm welcome as the new art team on this series. I've been a big fan of Charlie's ever since I discovered his work on indie great Astronauts in Trouble about three years ago. I've followed Charlie onto a number of projects including Nobody and White Death from AiT/PlanetLar, The Establishment from Wildstorm/DC, and a really cool Blair Witch comic he did for Image a couple years back. I even published the last three chapters of his and Joe Casey's Codeflesh back when I was running Funk-O-Tron before I sold out to Image. Charlie is a MASSIVE talent and I couldn't be happier to have him on this book. I can't wait to hear what you guys think.

Cliff Rathburn is the talented mind behind Reaper, a one-shot I wrote for him that's published by Image and should be out by the time you're reading this. Cliff is a standup guy, who actually started on toning this book last issue. I think Cliff's doing a great job and you can see more of his pencils and inks in this summer's Brit: Red White Black and Blue, coming in July.

In other news it seems this book has been nominated for an Eisner in the "Best New Series" category. I couldn't be more thrilled. Seeing sales climb on this book is exciting enough but I really didn't expect an Eisner nomination. Thanks for the continued support guys.

Now onto the letters.

Hey guys,

I just read the first two issues of your fine book, only to realize, that everything I could have said was already mentioned in the letters page of No2. The reason I write, besides thanking you for 2 awesome issues, is that you said that this book is going to be around for years and years. Well, this book is really great, but it feels more like a maxi-series to me and there are too many good stories that got boring because the authors just wouldn't stop. I hope you will... when everything is said and done;) Until that happens I wish you only the best,

Rene

I will never stop writing this book. I plan on riding it right into the ground. When I run out of ideas I'll just start adding aliens and stuff. I recommend jumping off at issue #75. Everything up to that point will be kick ass, so don't worry.

Hello to the genius minds behind the Walking Dead!

It took me long enough but I finally picked up this amazing book. Again, Robert, you have created some fantastic personable characters that I immediately loved. I don't know how you do it just KEEP doing it. If it's at all possible, I believe Tony's artwork has matured and become so much better than it was in his Battle Pope days. I am very impressed. It's about time someone drew zombies and got it right. I especially like the occational "Gak" or other juicy noise of sorts. The scene with Rick and Glenn in town was awesome! I'd like to poke at your brains a bit when you're not using them, you two.

The emotion in their expressions is what really got me, mainly at the end of issue four. I've yet to read issue 2 because they were out of it when I picked them all up and i'm dying to see what happens in the next one. You've got another perfect story and artist.

Stick with it.

I'm always hungry for more.
Jenn Lee

We'll keep the "gak" coming just for you, Jenn.

The Walking Dead is one of my favorite comics!!!!
The writing and the art make me wish for the next issue!!!! The only other comic that has me this way is Y The Last Man. A few questions:

1. Are the zombies limited to the recent dead or dead period? I think you could do a hell of a story about the body farm here at the University of Tennessee.
2. Will you possibly focus on different characters in stand-alone issues?

Anyway, love the book and I cannot wait for Rick to find out about his partner and his wife—cool plotline, but DIRTY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Please do not tell the readers what caused the plague!!!! I've had discussions with my friends and it's better for the reader to come up with their own reason, etc. I look forward to issue № 5 and the graphic novel coming soon!!!! Keep up the good work and loved the southern references!!!

Sincerely,
Bobby W. Chamberlain

1. *Recent dead only... nobody's crawling out of graves anywhere. We've got more than enough new dead people to cause trouble. No conquistadors.*
 2. *I haven't decided yet. For the most part I'll probably just keep things going the way they are and do the occasional flashback to fill in the gaps.*
-

Dear Letterhacks,

I just got done reading №5. I wouldn't have changed a thing. I was expecting some sort of fallout regarding Shane and Lori. To be honest though, I'm glad that it's been put on the back burner for future development. It seems to set better that way.

Here's my story about how I learned to stop worrying and love zombies:

When I was a kid my older brothers would do things like tie me up to a tree, pin me and bend my arms in ways they were never intended to bend, and all the other stuff that older brothers do. The worst thing they did though was duct-

tape me to a dinning room chair and make me watch horror movies. I'm not kidding; they were a bunch of sadistic bastards. At least, that is until I got bigger than them. Well, what scared me the most, with the possible exception of Freddy Krueger, were Zombies. I hated those things. They just kept coming, and coming, and coming. They always brought a lot of friends along, and were never satisfied. Kind of like relatives. By the time I was in college, I started having a lot of recurring nightmares about Zombies. It was pretty damn bad. One night however, something just kind of snapped. In my dream I bent over and picked up a katana. I turned to face the onslaught of undead... I just started hackin' the eff outta 'em. I merrily went about loping off their heads here, limbs there. I even cut the legs and one arm off of one guy to watch him crawl around in circles. Good times. Anyway, I don't feel so bad about zombies anymore. It's kinda hard to when you've turned one into a slow-moving top. Since then, I just really can't get enough undead. Bring 'em on. I'll be waiting with my sawed off shot-gun and Betsy, my trusty katana of death--er, undeath.

Questions:

- 1) With increased sales, would you ever consider printing in color? I don't know how I feel about that. I'm used to it this way. After all, Cody did point out that Black and White is the new color.
- 2) Why wasn't the dead guy on page one that was getting eaten by the bird up and moving?
- 3) You've mentioned that the purpose of this book is to follow the zombie story from beginning to end, not just a 90-minute chunk of it. What is the end of this story? How far away would you put it if everything went your way?
- 4) What's your favorite zombie story?
- 5) What's with the ad for Walking Dead №4 in the back of №5? I knew things were a little backed up, but you're not that far behind. JUST KIDDING!

That's it. Thanks,
Joel Ylvisaker

1. We'll never print in color. This was not merely a cost decision. I want the book to look this way. Nothing is going to change.

2. If you look closely in panel one, you'll see a big ol' hole in his head and some brains falling out. If the brain is damaged, the body don't move. The "rules" will be explained as the series goes on and the characters learn them. It'll all make sense in the end.

3. No specific end in mind yet... and I certainly wouldn't give it away here. If I had my way I'd do this book until I died and someone else that I trusted

would take over from there. Realistically, I know that won't happen. I'd like to make it at least 75 issues... until I throw in the aliens.

4. Day of the Dead.

5. *We suck. Simple as that.*

Hey Robert & Tony,

What an awesome, action-packed issue!

I had an excellent couple of zombie days this week. First, I had tickets to go see a sneak-peak showing of the new DAWN OF THE DEAD movie on Tuesday night. And then I was able to pick-up the best issue of THE WALKING DEAD so far the next afternoon!

I love how all of the characters are fleshing out so well. Damn you Robert for luring us into caring for these characters to then turn around and kill 'em! hahaha!

I was wondering, how long does a typical zombie live? Their bodies still decompose like a dead body should, right? How long does it take until the body had decomposed to the point where the muscles and tendons can no longer flex and pull the bones along? If all of the remaining humans can survive being bitten, couldn't they outlive the zombies?

Also, can whatever is causing the dead to rise cross over to other species? The bird that pecked at and ate a piece of skin from the dead guy on the car at the opening of TWD №5, could that bird contract the "disease" too?

And, about that dead guy on the car at the opening of TWD №5... why wasn't he walking around? Is it cause he didn't die from a zombie bite, or did he sustain enough of a head injury in the car accident to prevent his rise from the grave?

I was also wondering if the "disease" can be absorbed into the earth and plant life. What if a zombie finally drops over "dead" in a watermelon patch due to decomposition. The zombie can no longer move his own body. The body continues to break down, worms eat whatever is left of it, the worms then fertilize the ground, and more new watermelons grow from that ground. If after some time, a group of humans were to eat those watermelons, would they contract the "disease" and become zombies themselves?

Oooo! Spooky. When will it ever end!!!!

If you couldn't tell, I am a HUGE fan of THE WALKING DEAD. This is my kind of comic, and I

hope it sticks around for a long, long time.

Well, until next time, I'll be in the corner playing with dead things.

Later,
Jon Hook

A zombie's shelf life hasn't really been determined. I imagine it varies quite a bit from zombie to zombie. It's possible that our crew would just outlast the zombies... but that's the hard part, y'know.

Hello

I have not yet seen the last three issues of The Walking Dead series, but after reading all of your fourth one, I jumped out of my seat and literally screamed, "Gaw Damn!" Catching onto what was going on in the story I was intrigued, having bought it out of curiosity being a fan of zombie crisis films and literature. The writing is so edgy and realistic, I am really feeling so sorry for characters that have died and might die.

Another thing that first caught my attention which has seemed to be the hot topic with a lot of your fans, is the black in white, to me, I judge a comic on it's art, it's story, and it's ability to draw me into it's world. So basically, the black and white just flew right by me when I finished reading. As a fairly young reader (13) I am now interested in writing for comics now. Unfortunately for me I will rob myself buying and searching for every past issue.

Keep up the good work you guys, the suspense is killing me to read the next issue.

Sincerely-
Thomas Hadden

Thirteen? Is it legal for you to read this? You're not in Texas are you?

And that's a wrap folks.

For those of you that are not on the internet news sites ever, I've got a four-issue run coming up on Captain America for Marvel and I would love you forever if you guys ran out and pre-ordered it. It's going to be issues 29-32, shipping July through October. Keep an eye out.

Okay, so until next month!

Keep it real... or something.

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome back, folks, and you're just in time to join us for the infamous Wilshire Estates. Sean here, marveling at all the zombie action, and the real start of one of my favorite TWD pairings, Rick and Tyreese. Now join us, won't you? ... as we dive into this vintage bag of letters from May 2004... a time in which Robert insisted this series would never go color AGAIN and dreamed of making this series bi-weekly, which happened 9 years later. Never give up those dreams!

Welcome to issue #8. Things are running smoothly here. Numbers are STILL on the rise, word of mouth is spreading... and we just got nominated for an Eisner (did I mention that last month?). Things are good.

Before we dive into the letters I want to give a shout out to Charlie and Cliff, you guys have gone above and beyond this issue. This book is looking fantastic. I absolutely couldn't be happier with how it's turned out. Keep up the good work!

Now that we've got that out of the way... let's dive into these letters.

Hail,
When I saw the title The Walking Dead in the comic store, I jumped at it but when I saw it was in black and white I just put it back in the shelf but later I give it a try and a bought the third issue and I MUST APOLOGIZE for all I said about black and white artwork, It gives an more dramatic effect. Now I regret to had not buy the first and second issue... that's what I deserve maybe... But keep this good comic book and artwork like this, congrats again!

-Sputnik

Serves you right, asshole! Didn't you hear? Black and white is the new color! On a side note, fellas... ladies... please sign your emails. If you do not... I will make up a name for you... like Sputnik here. Heh.

Greetings,
I have been reading this book since it came out and I was amazed at how impressive it looks. As a fan of zombie movies, I always love to see the reactions of the people in the movies and how they deal with such horrific situations. Movies like the Living Dead trilogy are to me the same as films like "The Possiedon Adventure," "The Towering Inferno" and "Earthquake." These movies show all have

one terrific similarity: Drama. I would also like to say what a great job Mr. Moore has been doing in terms of art. The feel of the book reminds me of the original "Night of the Living Dead." This book is a constant reminder to cherish the things we still have and deal with whatever problems that may happen.

Thank you
Adam Langfelder

P.S.

Don't let this book get cancelled because I love it!!!!!!!

Thank GOD you told me Adam! This book was on the chopping block until I got this email. I mean... between INVINCIBLE, BRIT, Captain America, and my Savage Dragon and SuperPatriot mini-series I was just getting a bit too busy for this book... but I'll stick it out, for you.

Hey Kirkman!

Jesus! There's nothing bad to say. I recently finished obtaining all the current run of the walking dead series 1-6. And like any true college student, instead of writing my research paper, I didn't tonight to read all 6 of um. Amazing. Simply Amazing. Tony's Art, Your Writing,... and it's good that it is black and white (makes the whole book more dramatic).

The art, man Tony is such a great artist. I love his stuff. Its so clean and detailed, and just so plain sometimes. I don't know how to explain it! It's amazing

The story. !!!!!. It is like watching a movie sometimes. A lot of your writing makes me think of just great cinematic moments. I think that's why people are just drawn to the 50 plus books you write J. And to it was not long ago when I saw that special mini-series (Superpatriot) that you and Cory did. Then I moved to Battle Pope, then Invincible, now Walking Dead. I hate you in fact. Why are you so good!

1. Thanks for not making the zombies run. That's one thing that's pissing me off with the new school of zombie movies. Thank god you know what your doing.
2. How's the new superpatriot coming along?
3. Since you write about a dozen books a month any way, how about this idea... Marvel is going ape shit looking for people to replace their top talent because they're going to DC. Grant Morrison being one of

them. So how about this... New X-men, Writer: Robert Kirkman, Artist: Dave Johnson

Hey then maybe you can be in the Wizard top ten writers. Hahah, I mean common, you should be №1...Well until Image stops saying yes when you pitch a book, Make Mine Marv...err Kirkman!

-Iggy Osorio

- 1. No shit... can you imagine how much this book would suck if I didn't know what I was doing?
- 2. It's coming along nicely. E.J. Su is doing a bang-up job. I think all the superhero fans that pick it up will enjoy it.
- 3. I've got no objections to that. Except for the Dave part... that guy's a lazy bastard!

Just wanted to drop a quick note to let you know I really enjoy your little zombie rag. The pacing is terrific, characterizations are intriguing and the art is just nifty.

I hope the book continues for quite awhile. You've got my support. Thanks for the great read!

Jeff

We'll be around for the long haul, thanks to Adam's letter earlier. Seriously though... with sales doing what they are, as long as the bottom doesn't fall out of this horror craze we're living through, we should be around a good long while. My dream is to do at least #75 issues, but we'll see how we do.

Walking Dead Crew,

I first spotted The Walking Dead in a Previews magazine and the premise had me eager to try it out. I've been on the train now for six issues and I don't intend to get off any time soon. I usually pass up on Black and Whites, but the Walking Dead has me taking a second look. I'd love to see it in color sometime, maybe volume 2?

I don't know what you have planned for these characters in the future, but I'd sure like to see what Arnold Schwarzenegger looks like as a zombie. You wouldn't have to do much for Maria, however.

Thanks,
Ashur Givargis
Elk Grove, CA

No color... EVER. No Schwarzenegger zombies. Although, Maria Shriver has been in nearly every issue thus far.

Dear Letter Hacks,

I want to congratulate you on an excellent series thus far.

Judging by your letters column, I seem to be the only person to have been anticipating this series BEFORE it was released, as I had read previews of The Walking Dead on various comics news sites. As a new convert to the Church of Zombie, any news of impending undead goodness is good news to me (we'll just pretend the House of the Dead movie never happened). I can honestly say that despite my anticipation, you've surpassed any expectations I had, and have crafted an excellent series.

I also seem to be one of the few who doesn't give a rolling fuck that the opening scene was reminiscent to that of 28 Days Later. As a "writer" (and I use the term in it's loosest possible sense, as one who is capable of stringing words together in a quasi-coherent manner), I've started and abandoned several projects (including a zombie series, you bastards) because of similar ideas that sprout up around the same time. I applaud you for sticking to your guns and not buckling to change the scene. I also commend you for being able to carve out your little zombie niche before the inevitable onslaught of walking dead projects that loom just over the horizon (in comics AND movies).

As far as the explanation for the zombies, I'm not sure that's necessary at all. While writing a zombie project of my own, I personally found the time and energy needed to explain the rising of the undead to be a detractor from the events and pacing of the story. Where time and page constraints are needed, going to lengths to explain something that may or may not have true impact on the story seems pointless, and allows less time for character development. (Nice of me to give you the go ahead to flake out of the explanation, wasn't it?)

To the art. When I first read (and reread, and reread) Battle Pope, Mr. Moore's art struck me as good and a bit cartoony, and he obviously possessed a metric-fuckload of potential. When I opened The Walking Dead and saw his art for the first time since BP, I was awestruck. This dude has some serious chops. As such, I was disappointed to hear that Tony will be leaving the book, although the preview art I've seen from Charlie Adlard looks to be as much of an improvement on HIS previous work as Tony's improvement from BP to TWD.

Anyway, here's hoping that you can keep your series shuffling through the hordes of inevitable hungry rip-offs you're sure to inspire!

Sincerely,
Mike Caswell
<http://www.northboundcomics.com>

PS - Have you read Brian Keene's novel "The Rising"? It's an interesting take on the genre, and will help alleviate any remorse you feel over the mind-theft from 28 Days Later (*cough!* brutally sadistic soldiers *cough!*).

Read a novel? Huh? Are you kidding? There's no... pictures. As far as the explanation for the zombies go, I think that aside from the zombies being in the book this is a fairly realistic story, and that's what makes it work. The people do real things, and it's all very down to Earth... almost normal. ANY explanation would be borderline science fiction... and it would disrupt that normalness. In my mind, the story has moved on. I'm more interested in what happens next then what happened before that caused it all.

On Adlard's art... yeah, I didn't think it was possible but this issue was actually BETTER than issue #7. I'm shocked. Charlie is really bringing his A-game to this project. I think it's stunning.

This is My first Letter ever written to A Comic Book, So I might as well Write to My Favorite Comic. Here are a few reasons Why "The Walking Dead" is one of the Best.

1:The Zombies are Zombies. They don't run, and Transformation takes Hours, Not Minutes.

2:The Approach on the Zombies sense of smell. (Coooking the deer was what drew them in the Camp in Issue№5, Ain't it?)

3:(You get this alot, But its true)BLACK & WHITE! The Look reminds me of The Original "Night of the Living Dead".

There are more, but you don't wanna hear all of them. Trust me. The first Issue I bought was №3. I WAS AMAZED! I immediately got a car ride back to my Local Hobby shop that my pal runs, and Ordered №1 and №2, the latter of those sold out, but I got 2nd printing now.

I just finished Issue №6, and I wish you guys would be Bi-weekly, But then I know rushing out comics would not be fun for you, and if it's no fun, Why do it? But you can damn well bet I'll be getting every Issue you put out. Its my dream. A ROMERO MOVIE THAT NEVER ENDS!

Keep up the not good, not great, but AWE INSPIRING work!

-Jason

P.S. Ever heard of The Paper-&-Pencil RPG "All flesh must be Eaten"? Or the board Game "ZOMBIES!!!"?

I've heard of the game, but I've never seen or played it. I hear a lot of good things about it though. We'd love

to take this book to bi-weekly but it's just not possible. Maybe someday though... heh.

Dear Robert,

I picked up your series on a recommendation from a friend and I'm glad I did! It has fast become the ONE title I actually look forward to reading each month! I found it interesting that you said the title refers to the survivors and NOT the zombies! Keep the twists coming!

I just finished reading TWD№6 and all I can say is WOW! You've killed off 3 characters in 2 issues! I didn't see that coming! I guess it's a sign of your writing skill that the issue had a lot of tension and unease in it and not a single zombie! I didn't even realize that fact until you mentioned it in the letters column! Great job!

I've actually found my heart pounding faster while reading this title! That's amazing when you consider it's pretty hard to build terror & suspense in a silent medium like comics! The scene that really did this for me was from №4 when Rick & the boy had to enter the city looking for guns. I can't think of a more terrifying situation than that and then having to smear your body with zombie gunk to cover up their smell only made it worse! UGH!

I know a lot of people have mentioned DEADWORLD in the letter pages. I'm surprised you had never heard of it or read it before? It was a good series that unfortunately went away with the collapse of Caliber Comics. It put a new spin on the zombie genre with a talking, intelligent zombie leader (King Zombie) and the zombie plague was unleashed on earth due to dark magic. They weren't afraid to kill characters off in that series either which is always a plus and makes for a more realistic read.

Just wanted to send you these quick thoughts and wish you continued success. You guys deserve it! I'll be along for what I'm sure will be a LONG run.

Marc Cawiezel
Shit Hole Missouri

On second thought... that whole "The title refers to the survivors and not the zombies" thing sound pretentious as hell. So let's just forget I ever said it. All I really meant by it was that this book isn't about the zombies (as you should all know by now) and that there are going to be MANY issues that don't have one single zombie in them (like issue #6). The title is THE WALKING DEAD because I thought it sounded cool.

And that does it for this issue, folks. See you back here next month for issue #9 when things start to get... interesting (that'll be nice for a change, huh?).

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Happy February! Sean here, imagining Rick and the survivors' harsh winter reflects the world outside your window. Now let's go back to June 2004, when readers were still writing HANDWRITTEN MAIL. I'm not even clowning anyone, that's how I wrote my first fan letter WAY back. For context, we have NEVER received a handwritten letter hack in all my 8+ years at Skybound. So... glad you listened to Robert back in the day.

Issue #9 coming at you! This is my favorite issue so far, I hope you guys dug it... and I hope you're not reading the letters column first. GO BACK! GO BACK!

ITEM #1: As I type this, I just got sales figures for issue #10 and I am very happy to report that issue #10 saw the second highest gain the series has seen yet. I know there's those of you out there that are probably thinking: "Hot damn, there he goes again with the sales figures!! Why does he always bring that up... is this guy only in this for the money?" And to them I would say:

Hell yes.

Seriously, though... those of us that are familiar with the comics industry know that it's a tough business and that sales ain't what they used to be across the board. Most every single issue gets its highest circulation on its first issue, and then from there on out the series drops every month. Maybe a copy here and a copy there... sometimes it's a couple hundred units a month... sometimes thousands. As a result of this, it's hard for people like myself to say things like "Yeah, I'm going to do this book for at least 75 issues." If sales drop too much, there's really no point because NOBODY'S reading the book. That's just how things are. So what we have in this industry are new books that start up every month and rarely ever make it to issue #10... or sometimes even #5. So understandably it's hard for anyone to get behind a series they might find interesting because there's always the worry of that eventual let down when the series comes to an abrupt end. Something I've experienced in the past on my TECH JACKET series.

The reason I always mention our frequent sales increases is because I want YOU, the fans dedicated enough to actually read these boring-ass letters columns to know that this book is SAFE and that's it's OKAY to look forward to a lot of issues. Things are good here... we're doing okay. As I type this Charlie is putting the finishing touches on issue #11 and we're just blazing through this book. I just sent in solicitations for issue #13 and the second TPB (containing issues #7-12, scheduled to ship the same day as issue #13 like we did with issue #7 and the first TPB. Although, this one will be \$12.95, still monster cheap for 6 issues but not ten bucks... oh, where was I?) to Image for our distributor catalogue. Things are good.

This book is here to stay. No worries.

ITEM #2: Snail mail. Many of you write letters to the P.O. Box printed at the top of this page, and I'm sure by now you've noticed that your letters haven't been printed. I don't print all the mail... we're getting quite a bit these days, but I have yet to print one hand written letter for the simple reason that I just don't have time to type the damn things up. I value your old-fashioned correspondence at least as much as the email missives if not more because of all the extra hassle involved and I apologize for slighting you guys and gals in the printing department but I just can't sit down and type those puppies up... the book would be LATE if I did that. If I had an intern or something... well... that'd be a whole different story but until that day I will only be able to read and enjoy your mail without providing you the payoff of seeing your names in print.

Before I get on with the letters I want to send another shout out to my boy Charlie Adlard... hot damn this issue looked GREAT! I can't help but think the sudden increased jump on the series is due to Charlie coming on board and I can't thank the man enough for agreeing to join this wild ride. And Cliff, it wouldn't be THE WALKING DEAD without the tones. Cliff... you rock. (be sure to pick up Brit: Red White Black and Blue by Cliff and I... it'll blow you away.)

Now... letters.

Well, that was interesting. Man, this issue was definitely worth the wait. I was unable to find this issue. So I finally got it like 3 weeks after it came out. I have it on reserve at my local comic shop but they didn't get it in, so I then went to another one and they said that they were shorted and only received ONE copy. Man, it really sucked but when I saw it today on the shelf it made me quite happy, and after reading it, once again, it reminded me why I read comics. The expressions on Shane's face were really great and I did feel for him but he got what was coming. I can't believe Carl shot him. It was so unexpected, but half way through I had a feeling someone was going to get shot. Leave it to a woman to break up a friendship. Heh, just kidding, or am I? Anyway the highlight of the book was in the letter column when you said, "The Walking Dead does not refer to the zombies in this book". Priceless. I hear Mr. Moore is leaving, he will be missed, but after Mr. Walker left "Invincible" and Mr. Ottley took over I am not that nervous that you will pick a sub par artist to take over.

Peace out.

Nathan Taler.

Pre-order, kids... pre-order. I know Nathan here DID with his reserve box at his LCS but I hear stories like this all the time where people come to the store a week late and the book is sold out. Issue 7 sold out at the publisher level in three days, this book is moving fast, the only way to guarantee your copy is to be kind and courteous enough to inform your retailer ahead of time that you would like a copy to be held for you. Comics retailing ain't easy. The way this industry is set up with a no return policy means that retailers have to order all their books ahead of time and then they're stuck with them. These brave souls have to GUESS how many they can sell using market research and plain old intuition. Make their jobs eaiser... let them know ahead of time, what books you want. Then you get your books and retailers have a little less guess work to do. It's a win/win situation!

Tony will be missed, Nathan... that's for sure. There was a time I couldn't THINK about doing this book without him, but things beyond my control transpired and Tony has moved on to the ever popular "bigger and better things." You'll still be getting him on covers for the foreseeable future so he's not truly gone. He'll live in our hearts and dreams.

Dear Kirkman,

Funny how you comic book writers and artists get called by your surname all the time. You have your Bendis's and your Lee's..... anyway...

Love Walking Dead, I mean who doesn't. I do have my occasional gripe about

it, like how in two issues he traveled a damn long way. Seemed a bit rushed.

But what the who, it's still a zombie story done right!

Just pretty much writing to say well done on completing the first story arc, and its a shame that Tony has decided (Or whatever for that reason) to leave the comic. (I wish Tony luck on all future projects he takes part in!) Just saw a few pages of issue seven's flashback (Think its issue 7) the artwork looks spot on for an exchange in artists, and I look forward to seeing yours and Charlie Adlard's relationship blossom!

So as the story goes, they are leaving to find new shelter after the disastrous events in Issue 5! Hope this arc continues to show how great this story is!

Lee Sanders

Saffron Walden, England

P.s. So any chance of Rick and co to go via Racoon City to see the sites??

Or perhaps to a Shopping Mall?.....

Deserted and Destroyed London? :D

A lot of people seem to think he went a pretty far distance between issues #1 and #2. The first issue took place in the town where I grew up, Gynthiana, Kentucky, and it's only a six hour drive to Atlanta from there. It was warm outside,

and there was NO traffic... aside from smashed cars and whatnot he had to avoid. He ran out of gas really close to Atlanta... and then he was on the horse for a WHILE. See... it all makes sense. Just don't bring up the fact that he was in a coma for a number of weeks and didn't shit himself.

Letter hacks,

Okay, the only reason I picked up the trade was the low intro price. I've been reading about how you are a "must read," and I still resisted reading your comics. Well, the "must read" label is put on so many comics these days, I'm numb to this marketing/hype ploy. My girlfriend and I read comics together (we sit together and read aloud the dialogue and captions; we choose which characters we "play"). She actually jumped from fright/surprise at one point during the reading of the trade. She and I are totally into the walking dead; we are walking dead converts. Thank you so much for putting out a great, entertaining and engrossing story, and we'll be there every month waiting to read your book. You deserve all the accolades and rewards, now quit nodding off and get back to writing.

Sophea & Nicole

I DEMAND a recording of the two of you reading an issue. This I GOTTA hear. The PO box is at the top of the first page of this monster letter column.

Hello, I am a big fan of the zombie genre and you guys have definitely got it right! Great zombie movies always deal more with social commentary than the zombie themselves. It's this very reason that made Romero's movies so endearing. Your comics are simply outstanding.

For a number of years, some friends and I have been discussing the feasibility of a television show dealing with the topics of zombies. As far as I can remember, this has never been done. I'm sure most networks (maybe not HBO?) would shy away from the subject because they would automatically be weary of the gore stereotype. However, if presented properly, I'm sure it could a very viable program. The topic of an apocolyptic situation seems to really capture the imagination of people. I was engrossed by movies and miniseries like Deep Impact, Dawn of the Dead, and The Stand. You should seriously consider doing a project like this. Much like your comic, people will watch with heavy heart as the characters you develop begin to change, adapt, evolve, and even die. This is just my two cents. I don't have the means or knowledge of how to develop or promote a television show or mini series. I know that many of us out here would love to see something like this come to fruition. I also know that you are one of the few people that most of us would like to see make an attempt at it due to your style of presenting the topic as a drama as opposed to a horror flic.

Brian Skaryd Orlando, FL

p.s. I'm just a store owner, but if you get this project

started, I'll help in any way that I can. Every little bit helps and I do have a few minor connections in the horror industry.

There has been “talk” of THE WALKING DEAD in other media but the same can be said for nearly EVERY comic on the market these days. I’ll certainly keep you folks informed on what’s going on. It’s definitely not something I’m opposed to.

Hey

This my first time writing any comic of any kind but when I started reading this from issue one I knew I had to say something. The story is great. I hate when people compare it to 28 days later since they weren't even zombies. Anyways The art is amazing the new guy has done a good job, its going be a little hard to get used to but with a comic like this I don't care, the story keeps me reading. I was wondering if you had any plans to like explain how it all started. Like back story about how the zombies came to be and what started it all. Or is this for the reader make his own conclusions. I only ask cus I love zombies movies allot and one thing I’ve always loved is seeing how the outbreak came to be and how the zombies came to relive. Keep up the good work I love the comic

Mike "bowzer" Rowan

I’ll probably never explain it. We’re following these characters from this point on. There will be occasional flashbacks but nothing major and nothing going back TOO far. I think when you explain a zombie holocaust it always creeps into Sci-Fi territory and someone becomes less believable. It makes no sense... I know... but that’s always the impression I’ve gotten. The thing is... we don’t NEED to know. That’s not what this book is about.

Guys,

Have thoroughly enjoyed your efforts thus far on The Walking Dead № 1-7 (I've had the good fortune of being with you from the start, in part due to my enjoyment of Invincible), despite not being an avid fan of zombie films. I do, however, retain fond memories of Marvel's old B&W (the old "new color") magazine, Tales of the Zombie -- anyone else out there remember Simon Garth?

The story and art have been simply superb, as evidenced by the accolades printed in your rather lengthy (a good thing) letter columns.

I have but one gripe so far, and that is with those selfsame letter columns. Would someone please edit the darn things to eliminate the multiple misspellings, grammar mistakes, random mid-line carriage "carriage returns" and large white spaces in mid-letter, random implementation of "full justification," etc. Personally, I find it extremely irritating.

I suppose in some cases, if you used "cut & paste," it's possible it's actually your readers who have

made the mistakes (do them a favor then and fix them, if you're reasonably sure you're not changing content), but, in some cases, it's your words. As an example, in Issue № 6's response to Warren Jaycox regarding variants, you respond, "I have variants, if I can help it... I hope to never do a book that has variant covers." First of all, I assume you meant "hate" not "have." Second of all, I'm not sure why the "... " is there at all; if it was meant to be just a single period, the preceding "sentence" makes no sense with "hate" or "have" and if it's meant to indicate a pause, you're doing so right in the middle of a thought. So do yourselves a favor and eliminate what appears to be an "ignorance factor" (at least use a spell checker if the column is in an electronic format).

And trust me, if my major gripe is with the editing of the letter column, I think you're putting a pretty fine product.

howie

(an engineer by education, not an English major)

Man... this thing is spell checked and all that good stuff and things still just... slip through. I can’t... avoid it. I look at it like this... you’re getting the late-night ramblings of the writer, staying up WAY past his bedtime to do a letters column that is longer than it has... any right to be. It’s going to be full of mistakes... and I’ll just write that off as charm. If I stopped to proofread this stuff it’d take TWICE as long and I would eventually have to cut back on the amount of mail I read and respond too... it’s just not worth it. As far as the “...” usage... I’m typing this stuff so fast that it reads as my speech and really follows along with my thoughts... so every time I pause... I end up filling the finger movements with an ellipse “...” to indicate the pause. Coming back to the late night thing... after I while... I become delirious and my usage of the “...” gets more and more... random... and makes less and less... sense.

But that’s just the way things are. I’m certainly not forcing anyone to read all this stuff. The frequent repetition of the SAME goddamn questions in all the letters makes it pretty clear that LOT’S of people aren’t reading the letters column.

And the spacing problems and what not are due to me copying these letters from emails of various fonts and formats. You should see this thing BEFORE I run through it and fix stuff.

Sigh... I can’t... win.

And with that I’ll bring what is our LONGEST letters column to date to a close. What a BEAST this thing was. I hope you enjoyed the typos as much as I enjoyed typing them.

Be back here next month when our characters... pick up the pieces. It’s going to be a wild ride.

Sleep. Must... have... sleep.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome to the Greene Family Farm! Editor Sean here preparing you for a doozy of an experience. Until now we've seen a world in physical disarray, but with the introduction of the Greene family, we see how regular folks have normalized the experience and dealt with it in unique ways. At least Carl is alive! I love that little scamp.

While you wait for the next issue, enjoy these back in the day letters.

I LOVE this book, guys. I FUCKING love it. I could go on for days on how much and why... and I know nobody wants THAT, so you're just going to have to trust me. To see this thing already on issue #10 is a dream come true. Knowing that I get to play around in this universe for the foreseeable future is a damn blessing and I wake up every morning and thank that big bearded guy in the sky that I get to do it.

And... to top it all off. I'm working with Charlie fucking Adlard.

And that Cliff Rathburn fella—him, too... he's no slouch. What I'm getting at, fellas... is thanks. I know this book is loved by a good deal of you, and I want you all to know... NOBODY loves it like I do. I owe this book's success to each and every one of you, and I'm going to thank you by doing more, LOTS more. So I hope you're along for the ride.

It looks to be a long one.

Let's answer some mail.

Dear Mr Kirkman,

I can't believe it, you took the perfect comic and made it better. First off, I have to say Tony is a great artist and I love his work but you have to admit that Charlie is definitely a step up. I think that Charlie was the perfect choice to replace Tony.

Speaking of Tony since you said that he would be doing covers from time to time I guess that there is no bad blood between you guys, right? I noticed that at the end of issue №6 there is an ad for issue №7 that says by Robert Kirkman and Tony Moore so I am guessing that his leaving was very last minute?

There were obvious changes to the art but it still felt like the same story. It made me curious of how the process goes I mean do you write the story and give

it to the artists and they draw it, or is it drawn first or is it a collaboration? Will the process change now that Charlie is aboard? By the way is it just me or did Charlie make everyone look older, especially Rick and Carl. By the way thank Charlie for me Lori is really hot now, She looks amazing in that flashback with Shane at the beginning of issue №7. I just wanted to let you guess now that I still love the book and can't wait for the next issue.

Sincerely

Michael Pascarella

P.S. Has there been any offers for a movie/T.V. series. Also will there be any merchandise for sale in the near future (i.e. shirts, hats, action figures etc),

Tony's move off the book was a tad last minute but Charlie was able to slip in and really hit the ground running on this book, so the schedule wasn't really disrupted. There's certainly no bad blood between Mister Moore and I. We've been pals since before we had pubic hair and we're not about to let something as goofy as comic books come between that. He's currently slated to be our cover artist for the duration of the book.

These books are drawn off my script, so the artists know exactly what's going on when they put pen to paper. That's usually how books are done. If the artist is also credited with "plot" and the writer is just credited as "script" that usually means the art is done first and then the writer just adds the dialogue. But on most comics... the writer is responsible for the story and the artist is responsible for the pretty pictures. So now you know who to blame.

Mr. Kirkman,

I just read the Days Gone Bye TPB and issue 7 (I bought them both yesterday

- I know, I'm jumping on late...) and let me just say, Oh My God. This is my first time ever writing to a comic, but I just had to let you know how much I absolutely love your book. Zombie movies had always been my favorite, with Romero's trilogy being at the top of my favorite movies of all time, and to finally have a monthly comic to get my zombie fix from? Well, that's just friggin' awesome. You guys have this genre nailed spot on.

I was sad to hear that Tony will be leaving the book, but Charlie sure hasn't disappointed! He's got some big shoes to fill, but I think he's up for it, from the looks of issue 7.

Well, on to my questions:

1. Will we ever see more of Morgan and Duane? I really loved those characters, even though they only made a brief appearance.

2. Do you have a cause for the zombie plague already decided? Or do you have one at all? I've always preferred it when no one knew what was going on, as opposed to having everything laid out and explained. The unknown is always more frightening, in my opinion.

Anyways, keep up the great work guys, I'll be looking forward to it every month from now on!

Alex Murray

1. *Yeah... eventually... EVENTUALLY. I'm not saying when, though.*

2. *It will remain unknown until... right now. It was aliens... big purple aliens, with lasers. All kidding aside, I do not plan on dealing with the cause at any point in this series. But you never know... I have time to change my mind.*

Dear Robert and company,

Okay, I paid a hefty chunk to buy the first seven issues through eBay, so you had a lot to live up to, but wow, did you ever deliver! For the first time ever, an author gets to explore what ongoing survival is like in a Romero-ish zombie world. I have long thought that the original script to Romero's "Day of the Dead" could have been tweaked, tidied up, and fleshed out into an ongoing series about survival in a world of flesh-eaters. You have done better than that. Your characters have the everyday humanity that a lot of us feel "Day of the Dead," whether the filmed or unfilmed version, was missing. By giving us people with lives and families, you have taken us back to what worked so well in "Night of the Living Dead." You liked the conflict between scientists and soldiers in "Day," but I prefer the struggle between regular folk in "Night."

People who keep ragging you regarding details of Rick's awakening at the hospital have missed what should be obvious (wink, wink): Those were not errors; those were clues to what had been going on behind the scenes. The hospital was not completely overrun with zombies. A few survivors or maybe just one set up house on the upper floors because it was as safe as (read: no less dangerous than) the rest of the world and held precious supplies they would not be able to find anywhere else. Nurse Rossi, who regularly refilled Rick's IV bag and emptied his bedpan, was on another floor when he rose and didn't hear him. I just hope that gracious lady didn't get eaten after Rick, by unbarring the cafeteria, let its zombie inhabitants loose in the hospital.

I look forward to reading THE WALKING DEAD for a long time to come. Now if I can only figure out

how to get the thing every month despite the lack of a local comics shop.

Dr. Travis Langley

Man... I wish I had thought of your hospital explanation a few months ago... I totally would have used that. DAMN. You are truly smart enough to be a doctor.

Greetings,

Thank you so much for publishing my letter in issue 8 of WD. That is one of the coolest things that have happened to me in my life. I also wanted to say that you guys are doing incredibly well and to keep up the good work. I do have one question though: in issue 1 I didn't understand the nature of the scene with Rick and the zombie bike girl. Can you please explain it to me? Thanks Again.

Adam Langfelder

Rick was very disturbed by the woman... so he went back and put her out of her misery. You see... the thing couldn't move, it was too eaten and decayed, but the brain was still intact, so it was doomed to stay there on the side of the road for the rest of whenever. He was being humane.

And, buddy, if getting a letter printed is the best thing to happen to you... you really need to start dating. Chicks are pretty cool.

Hey,

I just wanted to say congratulations on your recent nomination for the Eisner Award. I just got into the whole black and white comic thing and I want say that this is by far the best I have read so far, even better than "Sword of Dracula." I have only read issues 6-8 and it can be confusing sometimes but I will continue to buy for as long as I can. One question though: when will "The Walking Dead" go into reprinting old issues? In closing I just want to tell you to keep up the good work and I will be keeping my eyes out for the next issues.

Chris Gordon

Issues #1-6 are already collected in the "Days Gone Bye" TPB that came out in April or May. I don't know if there are any plans to reprint the single issues. If there's enough demand... we may think about it, but for now, it's all TPB.

Hey guys,

When I was about 13 I came across Night of the Living Dead. A film that so shook me to the foundations of what it meant to be scared that it sparked a love affair with zombies. I soon devoured the rest of the Romero trilogy and began reading the

works of Wade Davis (Serpant and the Rainbow and The Ethnobiology of the Haitian Zombie). For me the true nature of real life zombies was just as frightening as the Romero celluloid ones. Because I think the core idea, and what is really frightening about them, is that they are basically souless people. Take that metaphor as far as you will, but for me, that's the true horror of Romero's films. That and seeing how ordinary people would realistically react under the circumstances.

Most zombie anything that has come in the wake of Romero has seemed to miss that central point. That the true horror of the zombie menace is due to humanity's inability to cope with souless human entities seeking to devour them. When you watch most zombie films like Fulci's Zombie, Return of the Living Dead, Let Sleeping Corpses Lie, or even the Dawn remake, it's all about the gore. Something that zombies have never been about for me. You guys get it right. Your devotion to Rick's character as the central theme of the story, and not gore, is what is going to push this book well into the future. You guys just get it, zombies, the horror of living in an undead world, the whole banana. Your work is a well-crafted character study of people in the absolute worse scenario possible.

I am a huge zombie fan in general, but I can tell garbage from quality even within a genre I am almost blindly devoted to. In that genre your work stands as a shining beacon of quality in a sea of mediocrity. The zombie genre is one that has very rarely been mined for it's true potential, you sirs, are doing just that.

Keep up the good work, and come visit www.allthingszombie.com sometime, we all wish you continued success, and riches, lots of riches.

-Analogzombie

Still working on those riches. I'll keep you posted.

Kirkman & co.:

I just thought of something. The group of people we've been following, for all their flaws, secrets, and mistakes, still find a way to make it through the day. They watch each other's backs, they talk to and support each other, and they find the positive viewpoint more times than not. This is a group of people you want to be part of in the worst of times.

The times that this story is set in ARE the worst of times, and as terrific as all these people are, they're still human. Its kind of the point of stories like these, the human-like entities with working vital organs are the heroes and so forth. But the best human on the planet still has their breaking point, and its only a matter of time before the right people in the group hit theirs, and the group may not be a group anymore.

That's going to be a scary time in Walking Dead history, and I have to wonder if, seeing everyone

thinking they can rest and knowing it could just as easily be snatched away, were getting very close to that moment.

Of course, you guys are probably chuckling your heads off, knowing EXACTLY whats going to happen and just how much your audience wants to know. This series is a continuous testament to how well you can think things through and make them happen. Keep it up!

Sincerely,

Ryan Walsh

Man... I don't know what's going to happen in this book on any given day. I just read the letters you guys send in and copy them. Speaking of which... this sounds like a good idea. I need to get to my keyboard--QUICK!

Hey Dead Crew,

I've been reading Walking Dead from the beginning and I can't put it down, now I'm picking the book up out of habit it's so good. Because of that I didn't even notice that you changed artists on the title. I'll miss Tony Moore's style but Charlie Adlard is giving the best work that I've seen from him. Is there a chance of Moore coming back and do an issue that takes place in the past? To maybe tell us how this story all started? It seems the gray tones look different from the earlier issues? Is this Cliff Rathburn's doing or is it because Adlard's inking is bringing a different feel to the book? Ether way I must say №8 was a great issue. As much as I love seeing zombies attacking them it's nice to also see them have a rest from time to time. But then again how much of a rest can Rick have? His wife is pregnant! And it's not even his! Damn, if I were Rick....well I would be dead. There's no way in hell I would still be alive with all those damn zombies out there. To think he came all this way to see he's wife and son to find out she was getting it on with his best friend Shane. That twist took me my surprise.

The final scene was touching, we see ever body in a bed and finally having a good night sleep...well some of them anyway. I really don't have any questions about the storyline in the book, I enjoy reading it and letting the story reveal itself to me. All in all I really did like this issue and I can't wait for №9.

P.S

In №8 you printed a letter from a guy named George Gatewood and you told him to get his brother to read it. Well I'm his brother and I buy the Walking Dead every month and he reads my copies, just wanted to let you guys know. So he's waiting for his check. ha ha.

Keep the dead walking,

Joe Gatewood

The check's in the mail. There aren't any plans to do any stories set in the past at this time. The story I want to tell is ahead of us, not behind us, and I don't want to waste time fooling with past events.

LH,

So, after a hearing of another delayed week for our issue 8 here in England,

I was told the week before my online subscription for that week (With the WD

Nº8 in) would not be arriving until the following week due to a stock take. I asked them..... begged them for to send my copy of the Eisner award nominee holocaust comic. But no, we would have to wait another week. 2 week delay... fuck that! So today I travelled the £4.40 (around \$8 I think, hate the converting crap) to my nearest Forbidden Planet to pick up a copy.... Two copies of Walking Dead Nº8..... No other comics to be bought. I spend too much already... just Walking Dead.... Okay and some backers for them, but that's it. So upon arriving at the shop, there it was. WD Nº8.... Well thank god! Lately I keep thinking that they are going to totally sell out before I get it, leaving me to fall to my knees and hit my hand on the ground screaming as people look at me like the loser kid that I am! But no.... it was there, so I didn't need to do that. I do have to apologize though to the other people trying to find issue 8 in the Cambridge FP, as I took all 8 of them because I am very greedy and I want to turn to someone in 10 years time and go. "na na na na na, I have all the issues!" And also sell them for like loads of money! I actually heard that the first issues are going for £40 already here! That's a lot of dollars!

Anyway, great issue Kirkman, love the ragging and the plopping, and its good to see that people can enjoy a nice steamy shag whilst terror rains down in the cities.

A few questions for you, before I drop into a comatose wait for issue 9.

Question 1: How far are you ahead with the writing? Just say what issue you are writing now, whilst this is going to press.

Question 2: Is it hard not to go out to people and tell them what happens in the future? Like the next person who's dies.

Question 3: What are you favourite comics of the moment? Any comics out there you wished you came up with the idea before they did?

Thanks Robert! Peace out..... blah..... *sigh*

Lee Sanders

Good Ol' UK

p.s. If you went to twice a month, you will only get some fool ask you to go weekly!

1) I'm writing #13, Charlie is working on #12. I've been mere days ahead of him before. Charlie is a machine. I did sit down the other day and plot out #14-18 so that I can get ahead. My dream is to be a cool six months or so ahead of Charlie, but even with him doing Warlock over at Marvel it's still tough for me to get too far ahead. I'd be further along were it not for the five Marvel Knights 2099 one-shots that were dropped in my lap in June.

2) Actually, it's hard to tell people when they ask. I prefer for people to read it in the books than listed to my pitiful ramblings. I usually get it all wrong when I tell people anyway.

3) I'm reading Marvel Masterworks like crazy right now. I'm enjoying Y the Last Man, and all Bendis' stuff. PVP, Savage Dragon... stuff like that. For the most part though... I'm reading the Masterworks, trying to get caught up on the Marvel U.

Hi,

I've just finished reading The Walking Dead Nº8 and frankly, frozen zombie? A touch of genius and something I've never seen before! (Do I just need to get out more?) I've been a fan of Charlie Adlard's work for years, ever since his Judge Dredd Magazine stuff, and you've definitely made the right choice in picking him to be Tony Moore's replacement. Moody? Dark? He's the man! Seeing that frozen stiff (literally) got me thinking. I can't think of another zombie epic with a bigger timeframe than even the month-long one you've had so far. If you're aiming to write 75 or more issues, surely the zombies milling about in the streets of Atlanta will rot down to skeletons with a little help from a presumably soaring insect/rat/bird/dog etc population? My questions are:

1. Will Rick and co, assuming they survive Wiltshire Estates, be headed back to a city full of immobile bones?

2. Will Charlie Adlard start doing TWD covers?

3. Are we going to see any more army/police/firemen zombies? I got a real chill seeing those zombie soldiers on the city streets still wearing scraps of body armour and riot helmets.

Please keep this book going - it's the best comic out there by a long chalk!

Best wishes, Dan Sharp Nottinghamshire UK

Zombies decay at a slower rate than a normal body would. I don't know why... they just do. So they wouldn't be rotted and gone after only a few months in the sun.

1. You'll just have to wait and see.

2. Not any time soon. Tony's still sticking around for that.

3. You'll be seeing zombies of all kinds as the book continues. Stay tuned.

Very cool plot with the survivors finding that gated community and everyone inside is dead!!!!!! I did notice something though. The way that the new guy is talking and interacting with our favorite officer reminds me of the two lead characters (the two policemen) in the original "Dawn of the Dead." You know, height difference and also how they handle the zombies when they are attacked. Nice spin with the couple having sex—didn't see that one coming! That's what's cool about TWD, you never know what's next!!!! Nice touch with the zombies freezing quicker than the dead—matter of fact—zombies and snow—that was new too!!!! Thanks for the great book and keep them dead!!!!!!

Sincerely,

Bobby W. Chamberlain

The difference between our guys and those fellas from the original Dawn of the Dead is that Rick is going to keep his head screwed on... sucker. They won't be wheeling him around in a wheel barrel any time soon.

Dear Kirkman,

I would like to start by saying that I love your book. The story is great and the drama that you put the characters in is by far some of the best I have read. Reading this book has really got me back into the comic scene after a long dry spell of not reading any thing that was at the comic store. Being a fan of zombie movies (viva la George Romero) and anything that has to do with them has also played a part in my enjoying this book. I started reading this when I saw it at this shop that was never had anything good until I found TWD. I started with №2 and after a lot of digging i found №1 and i been loving every moment of it. I'll say it again that you have made me a fan of comic again thanks a lot. This is the first letter that I have sent to a comic writer and I hope its not the last.

Thanks,

Phil Rivera san bernadino Ca

Man, have you been missing out. There are some great comics out there to read. In fact, if any of you reading this are picking it up for the horror movie aspect of it and that only, you're really doing yourself a disservice. You shouldn't go through life reading only one comic, though by just reading one you're doing better than most in the world. Comics are enjoyed more thoroughly in groups... large groups. So do yourself a favor, next time you're at the comic shop, pick up some extra books. Your wallet may complain... your refrigerator may be bare... but your brain will be oh so happy, and you'll have something to do when you hit the can (I'm talking to you, ladies).

Dear Gentleman and Robert of course, J/k

Your comic book has fueled my obsessive/compulsive disorder, making me crave and bug the sh*t out of the comic book dealers to carry your comic on a continual basis. I usually will call the comic shops Wednesday mornings to find out if your comic has released it's newest issue, and also to make the comic book shops feel bad for not carrying your series if their that bonehead to not sense one of the greatest comics of it's time. I have pretty much made it mandatory for the comic shops in my area to carry your comic, in hopes of some new readers coming across your book for the first time. I just can't get enough, every month I pray to the comic god, so that your comic book will increase in length (pages) for every new issue, and I pray some months that you will have a double issue month. The finale in issue№ 7 was so great and unexpected and the ending to issue№ 8 made me wonder if Donna is a perverted Peeping Tom or just a nice ol' lady who wanted to keep everyone warm to have an excuse to be a Peeping Tom? I love the tension and drama you create and instill in all your characters, where most Zombie comics just focus on the blood and guts, were as The Walking Dead makes me feel like I'm in a weird place called Zombie-90210. Did Andrea really sleep with Dale to keep warm, and if so how often does she get cold? And Is Lori going to have a boy or girl, and will she name it Shane or Rick? So many questions to be answered, so much time to wait. Well I guess I'll have to wait for the next issue to come out to see what happens. By the way Please, Please, Please, Please, Please put my letter into the Letter Hacks portion of your comic, It would be such an Honor.

Your №1 Fan for Life,

Sincerely

Jonathan Mathews A.K.A. Pharmerjon

Consider your letter printed. Would having sex with a man be warmer than just lying next to him under the covers? She was having the sex with him because they wanted to. The fate of Lori's (and Rick's?) child is still to be determined. Keep in mind, folks... it could be Rick's. I never showed them having sex, but they did, Rick mentioned it in issue №8. It could be Shane's baby though... I guess we'll just have to wait and see if it comes out with a baseball hat or a cowboy hat on.

And with that... I'm bringing this puppy to a close. Thanks for reading folks. And FUCK YOU to the fellas that skipped over this and went right to the ads. What's WRONG with you people? I put a lot of work into this thing. It goes a long way towards justifying the price on this book. You're really only cheating yourselves.

I'm out. See you next month (TWICE)!

-Robert



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome back, folks! I really feel like the tragedy of the Greene family, starting with this issue and extending outward over nearly the entire series, is one of the more underrated storylines. We don't get to know most of the family by the time of their deaths, yet it forges Herschel and Maggie into extremely vital characters, ones in which the weight of this changing world continually crushes the life out of... and yet, they persist and survive. Fun stuff!

Ok, now, settle in, and check out this letters page from August 2004!

Issue #11, damn... check it out, guys. Issue #11. This is so cool. Both of my creator owned regular series are in double digits. I gotta admit... a year ago... I didn't know if I'd EVER get to do an issue #10. I repeat, this is so cool.

Now that we've got THAT out of the way. Some of you may have noticed that we've slipped in the schedule, and also that this issue is shipping a couple weeks after issue #10 (or it SHOULD have, barring any printing mishaps). I'm doing something at Marvel called Marvel Knights 2099 and I swore up and down that my Marvel work wouldn't get in the way of Invincible and this fine title... BUT, a strange thing happened... an entire month went by without me realizing I needed to letter and turn in these issues that Charlie was sending me. I just didn't... notice. I had these five Marvel Knights one-shots thrown into my lap at the last minute and all five scripts were due at the same time, that time being NOW. I kinda lost track of days in there... and then the San Diego Comic Con threw another wrench into the plans. Anyway... I've fixed it, and as a result we'll be seeing a rapid succession of issues until we get to issue #14. There should be no more than two or three weeks between each issue. I hope to have #13 and the TPB containing issues #7-12 out on the last Wednesday in October... so let's see if I can manage that. Oh, and sorry guys. I promise I won't let this happen again.

Just to reiterate, this was NOT Charlie's fault. Charlie's been nothing but a professional on this title and has been early turning in every issue this far. I'm the fuck up here. Direct hate mail to ME. You know where to find me.

You can send some Cliff's way, too, if you want. I'm sure he deserves it for something... the fucker.

Now that that's off my chest... let's dive into the ol' mailbag and see if anyone's got anything interesting to say.

Zombiologists,

Daa-yam! Carl's shot! Didn't see that coming. Which is why I really like what you all are doing. I never know what to expect (which ain't easy in this medium). And I'm torn, ta boot. If Carl isn't dead, I'll be a little disappointed, but also very relieved. Disappointed because "I knew you wouldn't kill him". Relieved because I've really gotten close to the little guy.

And Charlie kicks! I was skeptical at first, but was very pleasantly surprised when he debuted with issue 7. I've followed his work since the X-Files. He's improved dramatically (and I liked his work before). I never imagined I'd prefer his take on the material better Tony's, but I honestly do. He brings an amazing amount of needed atmosphere to the book. With issue 9, he has hit his stride.

75 issues, huh? Or will you have changed it to 100 by the time the next issue comes out? No matter. I'm there.

Later,
Chip from Tampa, FL

You're right. I suck... I'd never kill Carl, he ain't dead. Congrats to you for seeing it coming. It was also spoiled on previews of the cover for this very issue, so I doubly suck. Sorry. And yeah... I'd like to do AT LEAST 75 issues but this isn't a Preacher, Transmetropolitan, Bone type book where I want to do 75 or so and quit. I want to do as much as I possibly can. If Charlie and I were working on issue #150 thirteen years from now... I'd be a happy man. I wonder how Charlie would feel? Probably sick of drawing people standing around talking, I would think.

Dear Dead Walkers,

Now, I've been a fan of the Zombie genre for quite a while now. I don't buy too many monthly comic titles, but I saw the Days Gone Bye paperback and I thought I'd give it a shot. All I can say is: HOLY FREAKING CRAP!! This is Zombies done right! The characters, the story, and the artwork were all so spot on I could sing (don't worry, I won't). I ran right out and snapped up issues 7-9. I then let my girlfriend and her sister borrow them, and now we're all hooked. A whole month seems so long to wait for the next installment now! I do have to admit I was very disappointed to see Mr. Moore go. Nothing against Mr. Adlard, but Moore's style was just so perfect for the subject matter. Ah, you're probably sick of hearing that by now. One touch I found very gratifying is the length of the letters pages. In a time when most comics don't even bother with one now It's nice to see some genuine feedback. Now just a few quick questions before this e-mail gets any longer:

1. Any chance of Zombie Dogs in the future? or are only humans affected? 2. Which month are our heros in by this point? 3. If you had to pick one all time favorite Zombie movie of all time, which would it be?. Ever played the "Zombies!!!" board game? I highly recommend it.

Keep it coming, -Jason Price

PS- pleasepleaseplease don't let Cory be dead!

Who the hell is Cory?

1. No dog zombies. Only Humans are effected.

2. Haven't been keeping track. I'm thinking March or so, by this issue.

3. Day of the Dead. No. I don't care.

Hi,

I own a comic shop up in Lacey, WA. I have been reading your book only for a couple months, now (sorry). I love it, though. The irony is that my fiancée has been a HUGE fan of both this and Invincible. He spent month after month trying to get me to add them to my ever growing stack of reads. I try to read just about all the comics that come out, but I am not a fan of Zombie fare, so, sadly, I skip them, and leave them to my resident Zombie Fanatic. When the trade paperback came out, I decided to give it a whirl. I LOVED IT! LOVE IT! LOVED IT! What an amazing read! I must say that I was happy to have read it as a trade, because your freaking cliffhangers drive me nuts! I just finished reading No9, for the third time. And yep, every time, Carl gets shot. I can't wait for

the next one. I read a lot of comics in my week... but, there are my Wednesday reads. The special few that I take time out of the busiest day of the week to read...this one has hit the list!)

It is consistently on the "Gabi's Picks" list now.

:) It is one of the books I put in people's hand that like Zombies, Survival Comics, stories about people interacting, or anything else I can think of. We went from selling 5 copies a month to ordering 35 in the last previews....that beats out some of my Batman, X-title numbers! We are not a huge shop so, those numbers may not be impressive to you, but for us, those are good, solid numbers. I have sold over 20 of the first tradepaperback, and have ordered more. :)

We give a money back guarantee on it. If they don't like it, they can bring it back. Not a single return to date:) It is a great book, and I really enjoy it.

In addition, we have upped order on all your other books. Like the new 2099 series, we ordered more of because of your quality of writing:)

Thanks for the fun read, keep up the good work.

If you ever have any plans on being in this neck of the woods, we would LOVE to have you for a signing. I was sad that I didn't get a chance to meet you at San Diego Con. We were there for far too short a stay :(

Thanks!

Gabi

It's always good to hear from the retailers of the world. I hear a lot of you saying that you have a money back guarantee on INVINCIBLE and/or THE WALKING DEAD and I must say that I REALLY appreciate that. It's nice to hear about good full-service retailers helping sell the books. You guys already have SOOOOO much on your shoulders (as I mentioned in a previous letters column) and the fact that so many of you are going that extra mile and taking time to REALLY promote my books does not go unappreciated. Thank you very much.

Dear Mr Image Big Shot,

(Had a ring to it in Issue 9 that I liked :D)

So..... you big mean bastard.... shooting kids in the fucking back now!! That's just so fucking cruel! LoL... what a shocking and depressing end to issue 9! and a great way to let the suspense build in time for issue 10! Shame that the previews for issue 11 kind of spoil the fate of young Carl's destiny in this horrific world,

but like some people on the image forums have said, we still don't know what Rick will do with this guy who shot Carl! Now? Why, if you can across 3 zombies. Two big adults and a kid, would you kill the kid first? Obviously the adults are going to be bigger and more powerful. As well as cover more distance if you need to scurry away! That's it, I'm not going to speculate more on it.... it will just get me gagging for the next issue more, and is obviously your plan (Damn you Robert!) Few things I have to say about the letters column in the same issue. One, thanks for printing my letter. Ever since I started using my mates (Tim Gentles also in the letters column for that issue) computer, I have posted a letter to you after every issue, and not only did I get one in. But I got my issue 6 and 7 letter in. So thanks again. Glad to hear that you didn't want to end it at 75 if you could. I sure that I can vouch for plenty of other 'Deadites' around the world, that we will support this book till the end. It really is something special! Okay so like many people said, Tony Moore was a big loss when he left the book, and its a shame he couldn't stay on, and even though it took a few issues to get used to, I have to say that both Cliff and Charlie have done a outstanding job at taking over and I am glad that you have decide to use these talented artists. Good job guys, and keep up the good work :D I have to agree with Chris Piers's letter. The new addition of Tyreese is excellent, and just what the group needs. The one thing I am looking forward to seeing now is, someone famous joining the group and seeing how they are effected in the world. Should be an interesting way of seeing how they are coping with the sudden life style change.

Anyway, off I go.... got other comics to read But I seriously enjoying it RK, and I have pre-ordered up to issue 13 and ordered the second arc's Trade Paperback, and now am getting two copies of each issue!

Now that's a fan for ya!

Lee Sanders (Little Lee)
SW England

P.S. Heard the good news at Comic Con. Congratulations! You going to be there next year? I might have to buy a canoo and come over. :D

Actually, Lee. If you've seen Dawn of the Dead you'll remember that child zombies are actually quite hyper and much faster than adult zombies. Either that or child actors just couldn't grasp the whole concept of moving slow and moaning. In fact... that scene in Dawn of the Dead may be the first appearance of the dreaded "fast zombies" that seem to be plaguing our fine genre. As far as bringing a

celeb into this book, I just don't think it's something I want to do. I just get flashbacks to the Tom Petty scene in The Postman... and I know I could never top the emotion conveyed in it with anything I could do here. So I figure... why try?

Letterhacks,

Oh, Robert... What have you done?

I almost never make it to my comic store on New Comic days. It's hard enough getting out there once a month, let alone every Wednesday. So I've gotta keep myself from reading spoilers and asking people what happened in your comics until I'm actually able to pick up the issues I had been missing. But sometimes I get too curious and I must know at least a little bit. Try to imagine my terror when I logged in at PJ and read that you had offed yet another character. First thought that came to mind was you had done in Rick. But that didn't make any sense because I had seen the cover with a gun to the back of his head for a later issue... which DIDN'T make me feel any better, just to let you know. Second thought was that it was either Dale or Andrea because everyone knows that you're not supposed to have sex in these kinda stories!... or does that rule only apply to horror movies? But then I continued to read on and saw a comment by a fellow PJer stating that the ending to No9 was even worse if you have kids.

...Kids? No way. Robert wouldn't kill a kid says Il

I hate it when I'm wrong. Not only did poor little Carl have to go but so did Donna. It took me a while but I had actually begun to like her. And then you did it again... just like you did with Jim. You took them away. But the worst thing about this is that it is all done so very well! I know that their deaths are going to have a greater impact on future issues. I just love all these character so much. More so than, dare I say, any other comic character I've ever read. They are, for lack of a better word, real. No bulging muscles, no perfect hair or spandex. These people could be my neighbors! So of course I'm saddened when not only one, but two characters are killed off in one issue. And xadrian was right. It is MUCH worse when you have kids.

Anyway, enough babbling. I'm not up there with Chris Piers yet. Charlie, you are doing wonderfully. They all seem more natural in this issue and I can't wait to see what you've got for us in the next one. Robert, exceptional as always... even if you do keep killing the characters I like.

Awesome issue, guys. Keep it up!

Jenn Lee

The sad reality of this series is that characters have to die. That's just the facts. One way to make sure that you readers are always surprised by who dies is to kinda make these decisions on the fly. When I started the script for #9 I knew somebody was going to die, but I hadn't decided who until I had mapped out the whole issue. I think it keeps things more true to life if I play it this way. It's also more fun. In the future though, the deaths will become less frequent as our characters settle in. So far it's been and every three issues or so. I want to at least once go about 10 issues without anyone dying... let's see if I can pull that off.

Dudes

Since reading a review of your book in SFX magazine I immediately bought the first book and instantly hooked. I hope you can carry this on for years and years.

How cool would a "The Walking Dead" television series be. being able to develop stories and characters over 22 episodes a season. I think the American television networks better start giving you calls. Has there ever been a zombie television drama?

To all American zombie fans I recommend Shaun of the Dead which should be hitting your cinemas soon, very funny, very scary and one of the best zombie movies since Day of the Dead.

Anyway love the book and wont stop reading till you stop writing.

Blake Goddard
Leicester, UK

I didn't know we were reviewed in SFX magazine. I suppose by your reaction is was a positive one. A TV series would be nice. I know I'd certainly love to see one. We'll see if it happens though. Any developments on that front will be announced here first. Shaun of the Dead is in fact an AWESOME damn movie. It should be in theatres here in the states by the time this issue sees print, so I recommend you all run out and see it immediately. Don't let the comedy fool you, this is a full on, kick ass, zombie movie... that also happens to be funny. The gore is there, the zombies are there, the effects are great. It's a fine flick.

Hello Mr Kirkman,

This is the first time I have written to comic so please bear with me, the comic is simply fantastic, sheer genius. I always leave your comic till last out of my weekly comic bundle, just to savour it, the best till last.

Seeing that a lot of people that write to you from the United Kingdom always seem to be English, as a Scotsman I thought it was my duty to tell you that a fair amount of Scottish people read you comic as well! We are lucky enough to have 3 comic shops in Aberdeen, and your comic always sells out, sometimes there are not enough for the pre-orders either!

(any chance of sending more the U.K's way?)

Anyway here are a couple of questions I hope you will answer:

1. At first I agreed with "He who is Q" in the issue 9 letters page about Charlie Adlard, but now I find his take on the series growing on me, hopefully he will be with us for a while yet but are planning to get other artists to have a turn on the comic?

2. Have you heard about Shaun of the Dead? Its Britain's take on the Zombie flick (better than 28 days later in my opinion) and is Bloody funny to boot. I urge you to check it out, most American Movie sites seem to have a few articles/ trailer downloads on the film!

3. I know your comic is centered on America and American characters, but how has the rest of the world dealing with the Living dead? Have less populated countries (say like Saudi Arabia, Greenland and Australia) did they manage to contain the menace more effectively, maybe still having some form of government? I know you have to centralize on the "little people" and ignore the larger picture but it would be interesting to find out what happened to the rest of the planet.

Anyhow, cheers for listening and keep up the good work!

Paul Middleton
Scotland (United Kingdom)
Aberdeenshire

Yeah, I've notice that an unusual amount of mail on this book comes from the UK. I think that's cool as hell. Good to have all you dirty foreigners aboard. Now, for the questions.

1. This is Charlie's book for as long as he'll take it. I love his work, doing this book with him has been a dream come true. I hope he stays on it for years and years.

2. *Seen it, loved it, raved about it in this letters column many times. Seek out Undead as well. It's also a great flick.*

3. *I don't even know how the rest of the world is doing. The thing about this book is that it focuses on Rick and crew. These people would never really figure out what's going on in California, let alone Australia. So we may never find out what's going on in the rest of the world. Although, as with most thing, only time will tell.*

Dear Storyteller of Warm Fuzzy Tales,

Issue №9 was great and all but why is no one looking or listening to any form of communication equipment? Some sort of radio should be on at all times. In issue №9 the thing you did the best was really present that even though the zombies walk slow - you can still get in a panic when you see them and any misstep could be fatal.

I wanted to ask you about a horror theory I heard years ago. Basically, the theory was that horror was popular in odd numbered decades. 1930's - Dracula, 1950's - UFO's & Aliens, 1970 - Exorcist & DC/Marvel Horror, 1990's - All the horror nostalgia movies. So we should be in a horror free decade now right? Well, it was a loose theory based that when times got scary so did the horror genre and then things calmed down and horror took a back seat. But it seems horror and scary subject matters are all the norm these days, especially in comics. Do you think the world just got constantly scarier the last few years and horror might be here to stay?

Brendan Walsh

That may be the case. I do enjoy the horror genre a great deal but if THIS is what we have to put up with in order for it to thrive... no thanks. I do think you've figured it out though. As for the communications thing, Rick was out for a good deal of the initial reactions and whatnot to the zombie threat. By the time he got to Atlanta our crew had given up on listening to radios... batteries... electricity... these things aren't exactly growing on trees, and are usually used for more important things like flashlights.

Dear Letter Hacks,

I cut my teeth on adult-themed comics with some of the best: Sandman and Preacher. I liked the surrealness of Sandman and the boldness of

Preacher. I'd trade both for The Walking Dead. I'm loving this book very much. Great work by all. I think Charlie Adlard is doing an excellent job as new interior artist and I'm very grateful that Tony Moore is still able to do covers (issue №9 has to be one of the best covers of all time). I have mixed feelings on the greys, but for the most part they make the black and white more "real" (how else would you describe it?). And the writing... if Ellis is Hemingway, you're Stephen King. You make the unbelievable - believable. Seeing Carl shot at the end of №9 let's me know that no one's safe, there are no safe characters' (except maybe Rick and in my opinion, he shouldn't be untouchable either) and that is a King-like twist. But most of all, you really develop the characters. If the characters are believable then the whole story is.

Questions:

1) Love the fact that you're not going to explain where the zombies came from. However, what about the impact this would have on survivor's beliefs. I'm an evangelical Christian and I often think, how would something like this affect my faith? Would I abandon it, change it, or maintain it? I have thought that a great idea for a story would be a Christian Youth Retreat out in the woods under a living dead siege. Imagine that dialogue! "Where's God in all this?" Suddenly a few "F-bombs" by the unruly teens would seem inconsequential, or would it?

2) If The Walking Dead makes it to television, rather than live action can we have animation (ala Todd McFarlane's Spawn - yeah I bet you didn't think evangelical Christians would watch read The Walking Dead or even watch "Spawn", well we know of one that does)? I don't know if you'd have any say in that but if you did, that would be the best way to see the characters "colorized" and "come to life"

3) Without giving anything away, I'm pretty sure Carl was shot by a survivor who was defending himself, not against the undead, but "scavengers" (that would explain the destroyed food in the general store, they couldn't take it and didn't want anyone else to have it). Romero's working a new dead film where class warfare is the main conflict. We'll we possible see civil war? Such as, one community of survivors vs. another community over resources? (this would be a strong possibility down, if this group keeps coming across survivors then we might assume there are other groups like them and if they're not "scavengers" then the drama is ten-fold! Who do you root for when both sides are fighting for survival, can they coexist?).

If this sees print in the back of your book it'll

take up a lot of coveted letter space. This is my first letter to any comic book and as long you're around it won't be my last. Keep the TPBs coming. I collect the monthlies, but love the TPB for real "sitdown" reading (I missed No1 and No2, but the TPB made up for it). If there is a successor to Stephen King or George Romero, Robert Kirkman may be the man (even if your work isn't truly "horror" or "macabre").

Merl Key
Columbus, IN.

PS - Have you ever spoken to George Romero? If there is a fifth dead movie he should let you handle the script!

1. We'll be dealing with a little religion in upcoming issues. But not exactly in the way you're thinking.

2. I'd love to see it as a live-action show with the color washed out. Maybe not totally black and white... but dulled down and muted, not quite realistic colors. I think that would be neat.

3. Stay tuned.

Oh, come on... you can't ALL be writing in to a comic for the first time, I mean COME ON! The TPB's will be coming every six months. We'll have a TPB in October and April of every year as long as this book continues. Never spoke to George, but I'm easy to get in touch with.

Dear Robert "Can I call you Bob?" Kirkman,

I recently enjoyed issue 9 (a big pat on the back to Tony for his most impressive cover of the series). I was thrilled to see your affirmation that the book stands a strong chance of really going the distance. The content of the issue, however, got me a thinkin' (as certain things sometimes do). See, I figured this might be a turning point for the gang, where they establish a more permanent home base for themselves. Instead, they were run out of town with extreme prejudice, courtesy of the Zombietown neighbourhood watch. I certainly don't mind unexpected twists such as this, but by the end of the book, the plot twists again like it's twisted so many times before: an established character is offed, and we see potential new additions on the horizon. Issue 9 was almost a chance for the story to evolve to the next step, and it really felt like it was time for something like that to happen, but at the end we're back to square one. Granted, the story is far from stale and there are several more issues available for progress and change to occur. I am simply curious as

to how long the narrative can remain fresh by relying on character recycling as the sole plot device. I'm not one to criticize - just wondered what your thoughts were on that. This raises a larger issue as well. As many times as you've said you want the book to hit 75+ issues, you've also stated your intention to never reveal the source of the zombies. I am aware of your reasoning on this and it makes a lot of sense. I wonder if these two goals are compatible, however. It is my understanding that the purpose of the book is to take a very protracted look at the existence of the characters post-zombieinducingdisaster, and also to be as realistic as possible. Clearly, realistically, survival would be the first goal of people in this situation. That is what the book is currently dealing with. Once that need is met however, what realistically comes next? Will the characters be satisfied with meager survival and no hope of anything more? Logically, people in this situation would want to understand the problem, and possibly look into solving it. This is because, as evidenced by droves of depressed retirees, people require purpose to be happy, much like a good story requires purpose in order to remain good. When it comes to this point, what will The Walking Dead do to give purpose to the characters and to the story, given that discussion of the zombie thing is off limits? It's probably tough to pull out an answer for that at this point, but at any rate, I just wanted to let you know that you've got me thinking about your comic book more than I think about most novels I read.

Chris Folkins
Toronto, Canada

Think about how different the first six issues have been to the current arc. This book is evolving. I'm just taking my time in these issues and having fun with it. This is not going to be a "find someplace save-kill a character-move on" book. You will be a very happy man by the end of issue #12. I have big plans for this book and I promise you it will be fresh and exciting all the way up to issue #75, then I'll run out of ideas and throw aliens into the mix... I believe that's referred to as "jumping the shark."

Dear Mr. Kirkman (or Robert if you prefer),

Congratulations. You have created a comic that is perfect in nearly every way, a success that few comic book writers can achieve. But after reading the letters column in the back of the comic I noticed that there were a few questions that haven't been asked (and forgive me if they have because I may have missed a few).

1. When you were a child did you read comics? If so what was your favorite?

2. What made you decide to write comics in the first place?

The next questions aren't concerning you personally but what you are doing over the next few months and such?

3. On September 11 and 12 there is a comic convention in Baltimore that you are going to be attending. Will you be there all day both days? And will you be signing while you are there?

4. What comics are you most looking forward to over the next few months?

5. Finally, because you are writing a comic about zombies yourself I can't help but ask if you are at all looking forward to "Toe Tags" by George Romero?

Thank you for your time and keep up the great work.

Sincerely,
Tyler S.

1. I started reading comics regularly in sixth grade. I read most of the Marvel Comics line before following all the Image guys over to Image when I was in eighth grade. McFarlane/Larsen's Spider-Man ranked as my favorite at the time, but I LOVED me some X-Force back in the day as well.

2. I wanted to do something in comics the minute I learned people did that for a living. I originally wanted to be an artist, but I suck... and I'm fairly competent at this writing stuff, and to be honest, I think it's more fun.

3. By the time this sees print I will have already returned from the Baltimore Con. I shared a large table with my buddies Frank Cho and Scott Kurtz and hopefully I got to meet a few folks and get rid of some of these boxes of comics I have cluttering up my studio here at the house.

4. Shit if I know. Powers... Hawaiian Dick... Savage Dragon... Planetary... Avengers... I read SOOOO many books.

5. Oh, yeah. I can't wait. What I've seen of it looks great.

I was in my local comic book store a couple of months ago, pretending to buy Transformers comics for my six year old, when I noticed on the shelf above was one copy of "The Walking Dead", issue 7. Being a long-time zombie fan, I decided

to give it a try, raced home, shoved Transformers Energon into my son's hand (while he feebly protested, "I HAVE this issue!") and read through it quickly.

I immediately returned to the store and ordered the trade paperback, and put myself on the pre-order list for future issues.

Since I started with 7, I have absolute no quarrel with artwork. I like Moore's style, but I like Adlard's and Rathburn's work just as much. Probably more so, since it was my introduction to the series. So for me, the way the characters look from 7 on is how they're supposed to look, and adjusting the other way was difficult. But not impossible, she says, narrowly eyeing several people she knows who gripe like whiny old ladies about the "shock" and "trauma" of the infamous artwork transition.

People move on for one reason or another in all industries. It's part of life. You keep your stories coming and find good people to illustrate, and I'll keep reading. In fact, if by some horrible circumstance you find yourself without an artist, you can illustrate the story with stick figures and I'll still buy it. Or you can send me the story treatment and after I read it, I'll generously draw the stick figures myself for free!

Plot twists: I can't believe you shot Carl! (she gasps, clutching her son to her bosom). Donna, I suspected that was coming. Of course you had to show she's really a sweet person first, so it would be that much more excruciating. I think Carol and Tyreese make a nice couple, but I like Glenn, too. So, please get him with somebody or have he, Carol and Tyreese come to some sort of "arrangement", if you catch my drift. I mean, damn, if Dale can score, why not Glenn?

Sorry this got so seamy, but you started it with Shane and Lori!

Stay busy...
Alison Smith

You'll be happy to see Glenn scoring in this very issue. Go Glenn. I hope you're happy, Allison. Oh, and just in case you didn't notice, Carl's fine! Wooooo!!!

And with that, I bring another ridiculously long and boring letters column to a close. I hope you folks enjoyed it. See you in a couple weeks if all goes according to plan!

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

"It's perfect. We're home." The moment Rick uttered those words about a prison, we should've known we were in for something special. Welcome to the start of one of the most memorable stories of this series. Over the next 36 issues, some of the series' most iconic characters are introduced and some of the most devastating, horrifying moments occur. How's that for a sales pitch?

Sean here, introducing these fine letter hacks from September 2004. See you next issue!

Welcome to issue #12, this brings us to the end of our second "story arc" (I use the term loosely). I don't want to give anything away but don't want you people to think this is yet ANOTHER place that they're going to live in for an issue or two and then leave suddenly for some reason or another. They're here for a while. This has always been the plan. The original plot for issue #7 was "They leave the camp, find a farm, they can't stay there, they leave, and they find the prison on the last page." That's how it was going to go down. When I saw the book was doing so well, I decided to open up the plot for issue #7 and turn it into #7-12. Not PADDING it, of course, but adding more stuff, now we got the intro of Tyreese and crew, and the cool neighborhood sequence, and we got to spend some time with Hershel before we left them behind. I think the arc turned out better this way, and I hope you guys feel the same. Sorry to give the minor spoiler of them staying at the prison for a while, but I think the "group on the road traveling from place to place" thing was getting a bit old and I wanted you all to know that we're done with that--for a while. This isn't the Incredible Hulk TV show.

Also, this issue marks the point where Charlie Adlard has drawn as many issues as Tony Moore. If sales are any indication I think you all agree that Charlie has really settled into this book and made it his own. I'm loving Charlie's work, each time he turns in an issue it really makes my day... and it always wrecks my work schedule because I end up spending most of the day staring at his pages.

This also hits the mark where Cliff has toned MORE issues than Tony. We all love Cliff, right? Let's show Cliff some love, he's the real unsung hero

of this book, coming in once a month, and adding beautiful shades of gray to Charlie's work. He's also a fine artist in his own right, pick up Reaper, BRIT, Inhumans 2099 (from Marvel) or the unnamed Marvel Mini that we'll be debuting in January. You'll probably be hearing more about that soon.

Oh, yeah--and just to piss off the folks that are sick of hearing about it--sales went up again. Now, onto some letters.

Hi Robert!

I just wanted to write and commend you for the work thus far on the Walking Dead series. It has been a while since I have gotten into a monthly that I want to keep up with. I wanted to let you know about a couple of books that you might enjoy and that your readers might be into if they have not heard of them. Both are a little tough to find (I think they might be out of print but I found both in used book stores). There is an anthology of short stories edited by John Skipp and Craig Spector called "Book of The Dead". All of the stories take place in a 'Day after the Night of The Living Dead' type world, which I know is one of your themes in this comic. There is also an excellent novel called "Wet Work" by Philip Nutman all about a zombie holocaust. Are there any novels or short stories you have read that have been an influence on you? Anyways--keep up the great work! Thanks

Matt H.

I'll admit, I don't read many novels. I'm more of an uneducated movie-goer myself. I'll be on the lookout for the books you mentioned though. Thanks for the recommendation.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

One by one, over the last 7 months or so, I've added all of your creator-owned books to my pull list. I've gotta say that I'm really enjoying the work your putting out! I have an idea I wanted to run by you and see what you thought. When

I saw the (awesome) Dawn of The Dead remake a few months ago, the one thought in my head, besides how kickass the movie was, was that I wished I could stand outside the theatre door and hand each person that exited a copy of The Walking Dead. An absolute more PERFECT audience to "witness" it couldn't be found! My idea is that, on your website, you load pdf files of issue one that are the size that 2 pages would fit perfectly on your standard 8 1/2 X 11 piece of copy paper. Along with that are directions on which way to run the copies (ex: page 11 and 12 on the back of pages 10 & 13) so that someone could very easily make good looking mini-comics of the first issue. You could write a greeting and afterword welcoming the reader and explaining that what they just read is part 1 of the tpb and a new chapter comes out monthly along with your spiel about wanting to do a zombie story that doesn't end in 2 hours and follows the world through to the true end of the story (every zombie fan's dream!) Also, a page at the end where a comic shop can either stamp their store info or enter it in via computer is also a must! B & W comics are a natural for this kind of approach but I also think Invincible could be marketed this way too -- both Cory and Ryan's art is so "open" that shrinkage factor wouldn't detract too much and maybe some doctoring by removing colors would help as well.

Anyways, if this had been available to do, I swear I'd have handed out 50 or so at that theatre -- and other fans of the book, not too mention all the various retailers that would use it to lead people to the tpb. I've never seen this idea implemented but that whole drug dealer analogy of giving people a free taste really is true. Comics fans are a weird bunch; I know you would get a great many spreading the gospel with no benefit whatsoever to themselves. What do you think?

Luke Hackenberg

If I'm not mistaken, Image's former marketing director (and current Managing Editor), Eric Stephenson has done this on occasion with many movies that have opened in Los Angeles, where he lives. So you're ahead of the game. As far as drug dealer tactics... what do you think I was doing with making the first TPB ten bucks? I was getting people hooked! Thanks for the suggestions, though.

Hey Bendis.

Love it. great art, story etc. I just wanted to let you know that I am worried. Everyone keeps

saying that you are the new bendis. This isn't a bad thing in my opinion, he has written some classic stuff. But, yes, I am worried. I notice that you are taking on a ton of marvel titles. Why am I worried? (as there will be so much more kirkman stuff out there?) here's why. I don't want my two favourite titles to suffer because of some bloody x-men character or captain bloody america. Yeah, I'm gonna buy them cos you are writing them, but Invincible and The Walking Dead have to be my fave comics (i even make my wife read them)!! Going to work for Marvel really is the sell out thing thing to do, right? Are they paying you that much more cash than what you are bringing in for Invincible and Walking Dead?? I am begging you, please don't let them suffer!!! I would hate for my 2 fave comics to slip from the ranks and for myself to loose interest in them.

Bitching aside, Walking dead would piss over ANY zombie film if it was adapted well enough. Can't wait to see where it goes, just sucks I feel I have to wait so long.

Keep it up.
Daniel

Everything from issue #7 and up on this series and #13 and up on INVINCIBLE was written AFTER I sold out to Marvel. If you think the quality of the writing has gone down since then, let me know. I will be sticking with these books for the duration. I'm a fast writer. These Marvel books are only supplementing the OTHER stuff I was doing for Image and other companies. You won't see more Capes, Cloudfall, SuperPatriot, BRIT, or TECH JACKET while I'm at Marvel... but I'm not doing any more work than I was doing before Marvel. My work load hasn't really changed... so you shouldn't see a dip in quality. If you do, please--let me know. Hell, the letters columns have gotten LONGER.

Hi all,

I'm a first time writer to your publication and I just had to let you know what an enjoyable series you've produced! The characterization and confrontations that occurred in issue №10 were some of the best yet! The highlight for me was Dale confronting Lori, mainly because he was right, that and the "old fashioned" method he used to confronther. My only major complaint was Hershel failing to warn his new guests he had zombies in the barn!?!?! It was so UNBELIEVABLE it affected my enjoyment of the issue. I'm sure Hershel will have an

explanation as to why he's keeping them, but forgetting to warn people was too much.

Furthermore it seems unlikely that Hershel would "sacrifice" his barn for storing zombies, farm animals need a dry place to bed down at night especially during winter. Maybe an editor would help? I sincerely wish you continued success and hope to see more of TWD on a regular basis.

Sincerely,
Jay Johnson

Maybe an editor would--the NERVE of some people. Chickens had a coop. The Horses slept in the stable, and the pigs had their own little place. They ate all the cows--they didn't have many, and therefore, the barn was free for the zombies to have, and I hope after reading issue #11 Hershel's reasoning on that have made that a little more believable for you. Can you imagine how BORING this book would be if I explained all that stuff? Don't sweat the details. If it's THAT important to you, I'll explain them away in the letters column but, Jesus, man... it's not that big a deal.

Dear Storyteller of Warm Fuzzy Tales,

I was excited today cause the NFL season kicked off and I just rounded up TWD №10. I chose the NFL first so forgive me but they

1. Considering the ending where Rick is told of the Barn's deadly secrets the advertisement for the cover of WD №11 makes no sense! But it really does cause now I can't wait to see how this happens.

2. You keep mentioning aliens in the letters column I'm starting to wonder if their might be some outer worldly elements possibly happening in this book.

3. You can't put a character like Maggie in a comic book! What the hell's wrong with you? You might have inadvertently created the ultimate comic geeks favorite character.

4. I had a terribly grand idea while finishing up reading the lettercol...You gotta a great book, fans are frantically boarding the SSWD, and well, you should just have everyone die, bam - end the comic...and just zombies strolling along. So many people would be pissed off it would be great...and then you would know you really really had something...but I know the cost of

living rules his out. Dam cost of living...

Okay going back to the game...its getting interesting again..
Brendan Walsh

1. The covers are meant to be more iconic than literal. I think the cover to #11 is a much stronger image than if it were just zombies coming OUT of a barn at the characters. You'll notice many of the covers don't entirely line up with the story inside. It's a different gun to Rick's head in this issue, and in issue #10, he never walks over a hill. In issue #9, Rick never chops wood, only to see a zombie coming up behind him. But they sure make swell covers.

2. There's not. That would be stupid. Don't worry. It's just a joke... or is it?!

3. That remains to be seen. I like her--too bad they left her and Glenn back at the farm.

4. I think you just discovered the only thing stupider than putting aliens in this book. Congratulations. Your mother must be proud. I'll ask her later tonight. Ooh la la indeed.

Me again,

just querying a letter I saw in issue 10 where you said you would possibly go back and visit old characters? Not sure if you read it but Fables is doing this very well. In between big arcs they go back and do a two issue arc of another part of the story. For instance they went back for a special one off to show the battle for the Last Castle. Is it possible that you may do this in Walking Dead? Like eave us with a huge cliffhanger, then do a three issue arc based on a school in Atlanta surrounded by a shit load of zombies on day 12?? Just to tease us. Even though I love following Rick and co, it would be interesting to see other events. (can you also explain your answer if its yes or no - don't print the bracket part)

Lee Sanders
7 hours away from Scotland

This must be "two letters month" or something. I don't WANT to go back and tell stories that took place before issue #1. That stuff at the beginning of issue #7 is probably it. I was going to go back and do a few pages at the beginning of every TPB that took place in the past (like issues #13, and #19, and so on) but I just think it's a waste. I've only got so long on this book, even IF it's 100 or more issues, I

want to do LOTS of stuff, and I don't have time to go back and show past stuff. Besides, all that stuff would be the same kind of stuff you see in EVERY zombie movie, so I don't really see the point. This book is about moving forward... seeing where the characters GO, not where they WERE.

As much as I really like your comic, it causes me a lot of trouble. The worthless comic stores in my town (Eugene, OR) only get something like 5 issues between the two of them. I started reading at issue 9, not really even knowing that the series existed since the store I go to only puts one comic on the shelf. That makes back issues pretty impossible but I figure I'd subscribe and everyone would be happy. Problem is that issue 10 didn't make it to me in my box at the comic store for some lame reason. I eventually got it (damn good I might add) but the whole thing makes me annoyed. I'm ready to go to comic stores wearing a sandwich board and yelling for them to order more issues. Ok, sorry for the whining. I know of one interesting thing that stems from the talk of a zombie's "shelf-life". It seems that in our food are so very many preservatives that when we die our bodies stay preserved really well, which was noticed by forensic scientists with the unfortunate task of digging up dead bodies. maybe those zombies would last pretty long then, even in the hot sun.

Later,
Andy Robak

Too... much... science... must go back to writing Glenn sex scenes and talking heads... Anyway, there's a certain level of suspension of disbelief that goes along with this book. Zombies do last longer than a dead body—for no reason in particular. But if the preservatives thing makes you sleep better at night... that's what I had in mind all along.

Hello,

I am in the U.S. Navy stationed in Japan, a month ago I went home on leave and bought the trade paperback after reading about it in Wizard. Needless to say I was BLOWN AWAY by your book!!!!!! Tony Moore is AWESOME!! So when I picked up issue 7 & 8 I was VERY disappointed to see that Tony was gone. The new artist is much better than I would ever be but since my job is out here I feel justified in making my opinion known. Please do not take this the

wrong way but I do not care for the new artist much at all. His inks are WAY TO DARK. I miss the detail that Tony brought to the story. I hope the new artist stops with the heavy ink because it looks muddled. I have NO complaints about the story, which is a far superior read than anything I have picked up in recent months with the exception to Harry Turtledoves alternate history books. I really being in Japan now because I will not be able to pick up this great comic on a monthly basis. Once I get stationed back in the good ol' USA you can bet I will be at the local comic shop every month!!! It would be neat if my letter saw print in the back of your mag but with the criticism I will understand if you choose not to print it. Thank you for reading my letter.

STG2 (SW) Matthew Tillery

Actually, criticism is more likely to get your letter printed than praise around these parts. At the risk of opening the floodgates, I print every negative letter I receive. We don't get many so I try to make sure this letters column doesn't end up being a fluff session. I understand Charlie's art is different but I think as you get issues #9-12 you'll get used to it and even grow to love it as myself and the vast majority of our readers have. Sales on his issues have gone up at a considerably higher rate than the first six issues so I have to think he's doing something right. Oh, and his ink is just as black as the ink Tony was using so I don't think you're right in your assessment there... sir. Thanks for writing in. Keep on fighting those commies! (It's still commies right? I don't really watch the news.)

Dear Rob, Charlie, Cliff and Tony

I've just read issue 10 and I've got to know, how do you do it? Each issue you leave us with a cliffhanger and still maintain the pace and emotion throughout the next of the comic? Surely there are only a finite amount of cliffhangers in the world?

I really love your writing man, Walking Dead is the first of your works that I've read and I must admit I'm hooked and staying 'til issue 100. The amount of emotion you put in the 22 pages of issue 10 was amazing and makes this issue your best to date. From the high anxiety of the first couple of pages, the confrontation between Andrea and Allen, Rick's admonishing of Tyresse, Dale speaking his mind to Lori and the final page when the creepy zombie music in my head began to play, just read so true to the

characters and to the way people would react in that situation.

Charlie Adlard's art is the perfect compliment to your writing, the looks in the character's eyes throughout this issue really smacks home what everyone's feeling and how tired the characters are. And Cliff Rathburn's greys just make this book 100% better than any coloured comic book on the stands. Kudos also to Tony Moore for doing the covers and keeping continuity going for this book.

Can I say a big thank you to my bitches Ian and Mark at Superhero Heaven, Aylesbury, who literally wouldn't let me leave the shop until I had read the first four issues of The Walking Dead. Their guerilla tactics have given you quite a big following here.

Well I got to go and check out the barn down the road, just in case. You keep writing them Robert and we'll keep reading them.

James Hollywood,
Milton Keynes, UK

PS. To all US readers, check out Shaun of the Dead and see how a true Englishman deals with the zombie menace. I don't think you'll get half of the references, but it'll still be a funny film. Thanks for the compliments James. It's always good to hear from our friends in the UK. More on that, and Shaun of the Dead later.

Greetings,

I love the latest storyline and I can't wait for more!! I thought it was pretty sick of you to try to kill Carl but at least he's ok. I am beginning to wonder what Tyreese's daughter and her boyfriend have planned for later issues. I guess I'll have to wait and see.

Adam Langfelder

P.S. Have you seen "Shawn of the Dead" yet? It was so fucking funny!!!

As mentioned in this letters column more times than "no, I didn't swipe 28 Days Later on purpose" yes, I HAVE seen Shaun of the Dead--and I love it. It's the best zombie movie made in the last 20 years (unless Day of the Dead isn't quite 20 years old, yet). I also would like to say that we're in a bit of a weird position here because Romero is making a fourth movie, Land of the Dead and while I have high hopes, and will probably see it a billion times,

I think it's possible that it WON'T be better than Shaun of the Dead. I'm just worried, it's been so long, maybe George won't be able to get into the groove of things... I don't know. I hope I'm wrong. Anyway, Shaun of the Dead. About a week ago... I got this email:

Robert,

As a fellow Zombologist, I just thought I'd drop you a line and tell you how much I am enjoying 'The Walking Dead' I picked up the first TPB a few months back and devoured it like...well, you know what. I've actually started buying comics again to keep up to speed, something I haven't done for a while.

I've actually dabbled with the dead genre myself. I co-wrote and appeared in the horror/comedy Shaun of the Dead, which we made last year and premiered in the UK in April to an enthusiastic response (it opens Stateside this weekend). If you get a chance, check it out. The thing that struck me about your work is that it is underpinned by a clear love and understanding the source serial. I think you'll detect the same affection in 'Shaun'. Don't be put off by the comedy aspect. We tried to keep the laughs and the Zombies separate out of respect for the dead.

Anyway, having read 'The Walking Dead', I felt compelled to say hi, to someone who is apparently kindred spirit. Good luck with the future installments. I can't wait to see how things unfold for the survivors.

Best wishes,
Simon Pegg

Yeah--that's THE Simon Pegg, the "Shaun" in Shaun of the Dead. I found it especially funny that after spending months saying "yes, I've seen Shaun of the Dead" in this very letters column, he felt the need to explain who he was. I of course, was skeptical... so I eventually talked him into sending me a picture.

Now, I just need to get one of these from Romero and I can die a happy man. You out there George? My email is at the top of the first page!!!

Anyway, it's late. Until next month, I'll continue to go by:

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Back like clockwork! It's late April, which means a new serving of all-new, all-original Letter Hacks. As usual, we (Sean and Robert) are going to try to run as many as we can, and you all haven't disappointed.

One thing to alert you to before we dive in... Around the time you're reading this, we either have or soon will be announcing a new project that TWD fans will want to check out for a couple reasons. It's pretty special and caps off Skybound's 10th anniversary in a big way. So if this sounds super vague, well... news will be breaking soon... and if you know exactly what I'm talking about, July can't come soon enough.

Nice tease, Sean! I'll do you one better... there might actually be TWO projects they might be excited about come July. Ooooh... what could they be?! I will say one of them... they definitely WANT... the other... they don't know how much they need it.

Now let's answer this mail!!

Hello Walking Dead Team!!

I started reading this series in literally another lifetime, and being able to read it again in a different format now definitely brings some nostalgia!!

I'll be honest, from the last few issues, this issue was one of the ones I was excited to see in color. Seeing Amy getting bit still sad as ever, but especially seeing poor Jim get a chunk taken out of him really came through. Even in black and white, these first few issues with Tony Moore really popped.

Grisly is the word that comes to mind. The campfire attack has always resonated with me, and color has really taken it to another level.

I hope I can make it into these letter hacks! Even if it is a bit of self service on my part haha, i think I only ever got printed four times in the original run. I never stopped then so I won't stop now!

So, ill definitely be seeing yall around!

Stay Safe,
Andi Rose Tiscareño
El Paso, Texas

Four times is a lot, Andi! It's great to hear from you again and thanks for your continued support.

Yeah! Don't be greedy, Andi! Glad we could welcome you to the five timers club, though. Andrew J. Shaw should be around here somewhere with your smoking jacket.

Hey guys,

Big fan of the comic and the show. It's a joy reading the comics in colour and bringing me back to memory lane. I own and read all the black and white ones, rereading the coloured ones is great as the lines blurred for me between the show and comic, I'm also hoping for some new surprises or who knows an alternate story line ;)

I was wondering if I have a special edition of issue 5 it seems like there is a perfect bite on the page and it was like that when purchased. Coincidentally it is on the page of the first bite to a human in the comic book!

Let me know and hoping to send up in your letter blogs like I did in issue 104!

Arthur Gallucci
Montreal Canada Walker

Indeed, you got one of the special editions! We actually hired a real walker to go to the printer and bite every 10th copy. In other news, we are now using a different printer because the other one stopped responding to our emails.

I have been watching the walking dead since the 2nd season and I've loved it ever since. I started reading the compendiums in 2015 and I loved the comics Even more! (prob-boy even better then the tv show) and I gotta say the comic in color is much better.

Of course the comic is better than the TV show! When has that ever been disputed????

Everything looks so cool...and much more detailed. Although it is weird to go from reading the comics in black and white for so long to color. I bet this is how people felt in the 60s getting a new colored TV set after years of watching everything in black and white..

I wish there were people from the '60s still around so we could ask them. But yeah, I think this is the same level of technological leap. (It's almost lunch time, so I may be getting snarkier for no good reason. I apologize in advance.)

Also I have some questions

1) Are ALL the issue going to be In color or just a few...?

ALL. We have over half the series colored so far, so there's no quit in us.

2) What's the powerhouse of the cell?

I don't know!

I don't get this question... what'd I miss?

3) Are the walkers like the George A. Romero zombies where they remember things from when they were alive?

Not really. There's been no evidence of that. I don't want to take EVERYTHING from Romero. Some of his ideas should remain solely his.

Thank you for reading and I hope to make it to letter hacks.....

Rigo

PS. If The Walking Dead deluxe goes to issue 193...I will gladly buy each. And every. One.

Awesome! Thanks for the support. We're less than eight years away from the end... a second time! I'll see you there!

Hello Kirkman et. al!

Days Gone Bye may be the best retelling of Hamlet since the Simpson's took it on in their Tree House of Horrors!

If you had stuck to the original plan of giving Rick the chop, that would have been so cool to see Carl's journey to vengeance... would he succeed? Or fail miserably just as his Shakespearean counterpart: Hamlet?

The parallels are exquisite!

Carl is Hamlet of course,

Rick is his father, also named Hamlet, who had everything stolen from him by his "brother"

Shane is Hamlet Sr's brother, who coveted his wife and seat on the throne of Denmark!

Lori of course is Queen Gertrude, who SPOILER ALERT (even though it's been a few centuries) drinks from a poisoned chalice not originally meant for her. Judith would come to represent this poisoned chalice, as the unintended consequence of lust.... death to everyone.

And I guess Sophia is Ophelia, she was seen holding flowers in Days Gone Bye which is how Ophelia took her life. I suppose Carol could be Ophelia, but that would imply a romantic involvement between her and Carl...

P.S I LOVE THE COMIC AND IM SO EXCITED TO SEE EVERYTHING IN COLOUR

P.P.S where the heck are all the nurses? I loved Denise Cloyd as much as the next guy, but statistically speaking we'd be more likely to come across a nurse.

Signed, Cayden ~ a nursing student

You analyze TWD using a Shakespearean lens, you're bound to get printed. I just read Shakespeare in a Divided America by James Shapiro, which you should check out if you're into both the Bard and AMERICA. (The chapter on the Astor Place Riot is worth the price of admission alone.)

Also me sometimes Shakespeare. Also smart.

Alright so I'm a huge Rick Grimes fan, I'd say he's my favorite fictional character of all time. I recently got a tattoo on my arm of issue 6s cover because I wanted a cool Rick Grimes related tattoo. Now...I want another. My question for y'all is...what should my next Rick Grimes tattoo be?

Cason Jones
Sulphur Springs, Texas

I would never encourage anyone to tattoo Rick Grimes's butt crack on their butt (SPOILERS: it's a frequent guest star later in the series), but free will exists, so do with that as you will, Universe and Cason Jones.

I do advise against tattoos any chance I get. That stuff is permanent, man! I say Rick's hatchet right in the center of your lower back, right above your waistline.

Hi Robert,

I loved the original format of the series, but now it is even more incredible in FULL COLOR! So far my favorite cover is probably going to have to be David Finch's cover for issue No.6. Is David Finch going to be doing covers for the entire series? I would love to have a full set of the walking dead deluxe with his cover art.

Yes, David is onboard for the entire series, is doing magnificent work, and has even done new covers for 2nd printings as well! So he's on pace to do well over 200 covers when it's all said and done.

It's going to be AMAZING. Finch is the BEST!

I have to say I'm most excited for issue 100! Will you ever do a continuation of the series? We could even see what happens 100 years after the outbreak began. To see if Rick's contributions to society would have been remembered that far down the road. Anyways that's all I got!

Sincerely,
Austin D. Lane

No plans to continue the series at this point. But who knows what the future holds!

Hi Rob,

Just wanted to give my thanks for this new representation of the series! I collected the trades, yet I much prefer this format along with the amazing colours, new covers, and extras etc. If you could pick ONE issue you're specifically anticipating to see again in its new form, which would it be? Let's just say I hope No.100 comes sooner than it feels...

Thanks again for all your work!

Kieran Saosila
Crawley, UK

The last one. Which will mean this series is done.

Come on, Sean. You know you love it.

Hello Robert and TWD team !

I been a fan of TWD since I started watching the show when I was 13 now I'm 21 and TWD is starting to film its finale season. I've tried to consume all TWD media I could in the last few years from the games to the spin off shows, but when it came to the comics I found the black and white print to be a hard put off. Once I found out that TWD comic were getting re-released in color I ran to my nearest comic store to only find out I'm 6 months late in 8 issues in, lucky the shop had issues 1,5,6 and I was able to order the rest online. Well anyway I just binge read all 8 issues and Im in love and can't wait to see Ricks story all over again with new twists and turns!

A few questions:

1) 8 years really?!?! I'll be 28 year old by then i can't wait that long ! I guess it's gonna be a long ride!

Welcome to the long ride, Trent. You'll still get it in half the time the original series suckers had to wait.

I'll be 50!! Have some sympathy!

2) Are there any planned cuts or changes to this re-released or are you keeping it faithful to the original comics?

Aside from Rus relettering the first 18 issues, no major changes. We've proofed it many times, but no changes to dialogue/story content.

Trust me... I was tempted to alter dialogue here and there but then that would be a massive undertaking and... not really the true intent of the book. So it's all the same, warts and all... minus typos.

3) With the Main TWD show ending and the OG comic have ended already are there any plans for any new Walking Dead comics with new characters and stories?

Yes. See announcement about the announcement in the preamble.

I consider them WALKING DEAD-Adjacent.

4)Can you write a Walking Dead show or comic in New Orleans or have any ideas for what's going on there in TWD universe! (I played TWD Saints & Sinners but I need something more)

New Orleans is the domain of Saints & Sinners right now, sorry.

Trent

I'm absolutely loving the artwork from variant covers on the final pages of TWDD. A lot of these I haven't seen before. It's hard to find where they originate from though, could you add small titles like "15th Anniversary edition, 2018" or "Arizona Comicon 2014"? Do you intend to keep the artwork section for all 193 issues?

Cheers,
Adam Knights

That's a good idea, but I don't think we're going to change it right now... unless Robert contradicts me. Maybe once we've burned through all the variants (which won't last all 193 issues), we'll list where all of them originated. Until then, the TWD wiki and comics.org are good resources to track down most of them.

This series is a pretty massive undertaking already and I'm trying not to add too much work for our editorial team. So for now, I will not contradict Sean.

Dear Deadheads,

I've been enjoying your new color run to the max, especially Arthur Adams' covers spotlighting major characters. I don't know if these need to coincide only with characters' first appearances or could also appear with significant events involving them, but if the former, then several important figures got shortchanged due to the massive influx of new arrivals in issues №2-3, including Dale, Lori, Carol, Beth, and Shane. C'mon, give these guys the Adams treatment!

Appreciatively,
Stephen Schumacher
Port Townsend, WA

Unfortunately, yes, we had to pick and choose our favorites; that was part of the bargain going in. We even featured Andrea the issue after her debut. Art's already working on the next cover (for TWDD #19).

My name is George Briggs and I LOVE IMAGE COMICS AND THE WALKING DEAD DELUXE! First and foremost that I binged read The Walking Dead last October all 193 issues a friend let me borrow and my life hasn't been the same. And It led me to now collecting The Walking Dead Deluxe which is such an amazing job of life being brought into an already binge worthy comic. I just got issue №11 today. Absolutely loved it. I read issue №1-6 so much they are pretty worn, reading it in color brings new life and because I love the walking dead such I knew when I found out that each issue was being re-released in color, that I had to get them. And that led to me spending hundreds of dollars on volumes. Mr. Robert Kirkman sir, I gotta say you have blown my mind. I thought, okay, let me get Outcast Volume 1 and see what else this amazing writer can cook up. And not even half way thru volume 1 of Outcast I was ordering 1-7. No joke. And then?!?! I picked up Oblivion Song Volume 1 from my local Barnes and Noble yesterday and I got Volume 2,3,4 coming by Friday. I'll say it straight up, The Walking Dead was the first comic i ever read and from there it just branched off and keeps going. I love what Image and you Robert Kirkman produce so amazingly that now I, with no other choice, had to 'crossover' and now I'm collecting TWD Deluxe, And Crossover. But I'm enjoying binge reading new volumes. And I owe it all to you and my friend who let me read non stop all 193 original issues. If I see this in an upcoming issue I will flip out because I'm like a ghost in the mist,

easily missed. I just hope you, Robert Kirkman, read this and everyone at Skybound and Image because you guys are truly heros. You got me away from the TV and into reading. You gave me a reason to want to spend my money, not in television, but in comics and graphic novels that can be shared for generations to come. Woo woo! COMICS! 4 life! The Walking Dead Deluxe is a once in a lifetime because there won't be volumes and that in and of itself is just amazing. I can't wait to binge read all №193 when they all get done.

George

George, you win the award for the most enthusiastic letter of the month. Have you read FIRE POWER yet? INVINCIBLE? STILLWATER? ULTRAMEGA? We have a lot of great titles to check out, with a lot more coming to comic stores every week. Thanks for choosing comics

Hey, George! Thanks so much for writing. I love all my fans equally but the ones who read a large chunk of my work are extra special in my book. I plug away at all these different books and some of them are so different I don't expect people to try them all because people have different tastes. So when people branch out into my different work it really means a lot to me. Thanks!

Listen to Sean and try those other books!

Okay, so many thoughts to unpack here.

First off, Mr. Kirkman, Mr. Moore, Mr. Adlard and Mr. McCaig, and the entire crew at Skybound, Telltale, AMC and Image Comics, thank you all so much for your hard work within The Walking Dead Franchise.

Clementine's story was my introduction to this franchise on iBerleezy's watcher (#Eezy Gang, eugggghhh) playthroughs. I fell in love with the characters, the roller coaster ride of emotions that the storylines would send me on, etc. So I decided (since I am such a "Source Material first" kinda person AND the games are more canon with the comics than the show) I'd read the comics before renting DVDs of the show.

This easily became my favorite comic / graphic novel series. The times I laughed, teared up, gasped and yelled "FUCK!" (I feel you would have loved my reaction to Carl's eye-popping "Dad....?" moment, Kirkman; hehe, see what I did there?) during my first reading experience. It was unlike any other. And whenever I need a read at any time, The Walking Dead is always my №1 pick.

Funny thing is I was rereading the series again during the summer of 2020 and I mentioned to my best friend that I would love to re-experience the series in color. I wake up the next morning to the announcement of the series being re-released in color, issue by issue. So where's MY check, y'all? ;)

Kidding.

My questions, really fast, are these:

1) Has the thought of continuing "Negan Lives"

as a spinoff or miniseries come into development more? I personally would enjoy that very much! And it would be so interesting to see if he and Lucy came across Clementine (and maybe AJ??) on their journey to put Lucille at a proper rest. Or will we get an issue or so of Clem? Whether during the events of the Telltale games or after? I understand that must be difficult if you tried to do so.

Clementine was left in such a great place at the end of the Telltale series, that if she ever returns, we want to make sure the story honors her journey and is worth telling.

No plans for more NEGAN LIVES but there are definitely some interesting things on the horizon.

And 2) I recently just finished "Rise of the Governor." And ordered the rest of the WD novels off Amazon. Do you have plans to do any more novels set in the comic universe? Maybe about Negan, the Grimes, Clementine, maybe Lee Everett?? You'd get my pre-order. Or even more Script Books like you did for the first Volume would be cool!

Assume you picked by TWD: Typhoon by Wes Chu, as well? Right now there are no plans for more novels, but there is a TWD-related book project that will be announced soon (if it hasn't already been—and I swear, this one is totally different than what was teased above).

With utmost respect and sincerity, thank you for this!

Tyre'k Hyde

P.S. "COAAAARRRRLLLLLLL!!!"

Long-time comic reader, first-time comic writer. (The kids may not get that radio reference...)

First and foremost, thank you for keeping the art of comic letter writing and the fan page alive! I feel like this may be one of the last comics that have this awesome experience of interacting with creators in this way during the digital age. I didn't experience it early on, but I always love reading through these columns in old comics! Right alongside those classic ads for Atlas supplements, haha!

Like other readers in the Deluxe letter columns, I'll admit that I didn't start reading this story until around season 2 of the TV show, but MAN I got hooked when a friend introduced it to me. Other than the show, I'll never forget the moment that got me to keep reading. It was those final panels of issue №15... That was the moment where I knew nothing was off-limits. I think most of the world wasn't surprised when that moment didn't make the TV screen, but I wondered the whole way. I know we're already on 11, and by the time this could be printed, we'll probably already be there, but I have to wonder how on Earth you're going to put that in color!? I feel emotional just thinking about it!!!

I'm looking at that page right now and... it's really effective.

Random question: Have you ever thought about doing a "What If...?" kind of storyline for TWD? Or

is that pretty much how the games/TV shows/etc. feel for you?

Very Respectfully,
Matthew H.

In a way, yeah... that's kind of how the show works in my mind. There's a lot of "what if" scenarios that play out in the show. It would be a fun thing to do in comics but honestly, I'd rather do completely new comics instead.

We'll be back with more all-new letters six issues from now, which just happens to coincide with the debut of one of THE GREATEST WALKING DEAD CHARACTERS OF ALL-TIME. We got some special plans for that issue.

Until then, check out the throwback Hacks, stay safe out there, and come back in two weeks for our next issue!

-Sean Mackiewicz

See you all then!

-Robert Kirkman

Welcome to a new edition of Letter Hacks, your monthly letters column feature here in THE WALKING DEAD. Issue #13, check that out huh? This books just rolling along. I can't wait until we're past issue #25... I love the big numbers.

Before I dive into the letters here, I just wanted to give Charlie and Cliff another pat on the back for another solid issue. Nice job, guys. And Tony... nice cover, as always.

Now I'd like to say something about Remains. Remains is the book from IDW by Steve Niles and Kieron Dwyer. Kieron and I served together in Dessert Storm (not a typo) so we've been pals for a while. I've spoke briefly with Niles but never more than a "how's your mother" and maybe a pat on the ass (Niles, you old sea salt). However, despite Kieron's inability to eat fifty hot fudge Sundays in one sitting and Nile's obsession with the male posterior, they put together one HELL of a zombie comic. I'll admit, I didn't like the REASON for the zombies at first, but everything after that point is solid gold. The art is great (nice colors by Harper Jaten) and the story is rock solid. They do tons of innovative stuff with the zombies and I really like where they take the book. Guys... I'm DYING for more so if you're reading this, please... make it happen. And for those of you reading at home, the TPB collecting all five issues should be available soon. So pick it up at your local comic shop or maybe a little place I like to call www.khepri.com. Tell them I sent you... they'll say "WHO?"

Now, let's read these damn letters and get it over with... we got a LOT this month... so I'm printing a BUNCH of them. Here we GOOOOOOOOOOO.

Zombiologists,

First off, thanks for printing my virgin letter to a comic book. My wife looked at me like I was

regurgitating neon green clay as I geeked out over seeing my letter printed.

Great foreshadowing regarding the barn. Delicious irony that the child Hershel couldn't bring himself to kill led to the death of his remaining children. Poetic in a sick sorta way. Did you have that planned all along? I know you said you tend to wing the death thing, but this felt planned. Damn good drama, nonetheless.

I also thought it was intriguing that someone could entertain the possibility that the rotting, walking corpses were actually just sick people on the road back to health. I'm not a big fan of the genre (though Shawn of the Dead does look interesting), so maybe this isn't such a fresh concept, but it seemed original to me. Beautiful case of denial.

Thing I don't get is why were the kids schtuping in the barn? "Ooh, the putrid stench and the gurgling, rasping, desparate moans of the living dead REALLY get me hot!" Hormones aren't THAT powerful. There had to be a better place. HAD to be. That was just a little too convenient to the scene. At least to me, it felt forced. I didn't ruin the read. It just sorta took me outta the moment for a split second.

I love the complexity you all bring to this large cast. Hell, I just love the book, period.

Chip

The were schtuping in the shed where the tractors and plows were kept, not the barn. And I had the bit with Hershel planned, I don't make it ALL up as I go along. I have things mapped out pretty far in advance. It's just sometimes I decide out of the blue to kill characters I hadn't planned on killing before I was writing any given issue. It's like playing God.

Zombiologists,

How the heck did I miss that? That wasn't the young lovers in the barn! They were sibling, Lacey and Arnold, sent around to the back to distract the zombies.

Whoa! I feel SO stupid. How did I miss that?

I take that paragraph of my last letter back. I was abducted by aliens, and missed that part of the book during my lost time incident. Yeah, sure. That works.

Chip
Tampa, FL

Two from Chip too! Oh, THAT'S what you were talking about. Okay. All is forgiven.

...Ok, ok - so you find it hard to believe that so many letter-virgins are writing in - here's another. I don't collect comics. I feel free to ridicule the friends of mine that make regular forays into the local stores. I don't read comics, with one exception - TWD. Sure; I'm a zombie fan; love the movies, etc., but not obsessive - no dreams about zombie-lovin' or any such nonsense. Other than splurging on the complete collection of

"Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers" a few years back in a fit of nostalgia, I hadn't purchase any comics since I was significantly younger back in the early 80's.

However (!) - your collective work on this series is just excellent. Been picking this up since issue №1 after a co-worker turned me on to it; watched issue №2 command crazy prices on eBay - you've got a real ride going on here, with no end in sight! Congratulations; it's rare that you find a job that you love to do that rewards you with such success in turn! I in turn have grudgingly admitted that there are actually comics out there that I'll pay \$3 for, even though (in my mind) I should still be able to pick them up for \$.50 or so as I did when I was a kid ;-)

Insert bitch about Tony leaving [here]. I will admit that Charlie's art is growing on me; still getting used to the new faces on the characters, but I'm not going anywhere, so I'll shut up. Bottom line - keep up the great work guys; you've got a real gem here. I'll pass on the space aliens, but I otherwise have no complaints about the direction you're taking these folks, and I'm looking forward to the shortened delivery times of the upcoming issues as you note in №11 - a nice pre-Christmas present!

The fact that you are getting so many folks to write in who wouldn't otherwise should give you confirmation that you're reaching not only your target audience of hardcore comics folks, but others out there who enjoy a good story, along with some good zombie action. I'm ready for that HBO series - bring it on already!

Regards,
Brent Walker

Tell someone at HBO to contact me and I'll make sure it happens Brent. Nobody would be happier than me to see this become a television series. Glad you feel the book is worth the money. You've got plenty of time until the space aliens show up.

Dear Letterhacks:

Sorry I was gone so long. I lost track of whether or not I'd sent a letter and then I went and bought myself a house which ends up making you busy (so that's a heads up to all you hopeful homeowners out there!).

Issue №11 was "da bomb" as one of my co-workers might say. It fully energized me via zombie-scare power! Adlard's becoming a comfy look with each passing issue and he really is great at actual panel-to-panel storytelling. I'm glad we're still getting Tony's kickass covers though.

Congrats on the Book of the Month recognition in this past month's Wizard (it was the one with Wolverine on the cover for a change). Zombies are making a pretty big comeback in pop-culture. They're the new pirates, which were the new monkeys only a few months ago! Now, with Shaun of the Dead, Resident Evil Apocalypse, Dawn of the Dead remake and so on at the theatres zombie stories are big, but you guys were right there at the forefront and you're still consistently delivering a quality story. Walking Dead separates itself by focusing on the

day-to-day life of the survivors well after a 2-hour battle against the undead.

Questions.

1) I hear Shaun of the Dead star Simon Pegg is a fan. Is Romero on the bandwagon yet?

2) It's perhaps premature, but if you could translate Walking Dead into another medium, what would be your first choice?

3) On a scale of 1 to 10, how bad of an idea is it to store dead people in your barn? I ask not just because of the events of issue 11 but also a personal matter I need to keep quiet. Therefore, I figured asking you here on the letters page was the best option.

4) You've created such a great world. Would you ever consider doing an annual or one-shot of short stories similar to the old Battle Pope Shorts issues that would explore supporting characters and smaller side-stories?

5) Will we ever get to see the survivors hit a major city like New York?

6) When will we see a military presence? Even if they couldn't resolve the zombie problem, I have to believe the superior firepower and tactics of today's modern military would allow them to safely retreat and set up safe zones SOMEWHERE.

7) Did Osama bin Laden get ripped apart in a truly horrible way in the Walking Dead universe? I hope so. I bet his friend Hitler was up in heaven laughing at him the whole time too!

8) Are American zombies stronger than Australian zombies?

9) Did you already have plans for adding Tyreese or did he get added because I begged you to include an ex-NFL player so much?

Keep up the fantastic work,
Chris Piers

Welcome back, Chris. We hardly knew what to do with ourselves in your absence.

1) *Not that I know of. I'd love to hear from him, though.*

2) *Television.*

3) *3.5 but I'm a little biased as to your well being.*

4) *Not at the moment, I like keeping things in this book and NOT trying to cash in on its success and gouge more money from you folks. I may do one eventually though.*

5) *Possibly, but I'm not going to tell HERE.*

6) *You think? I guess you'll just have to wait and see.*

7) *In Heaven? What side are you on?*

8) *Usually.*

9) *Chris, you poor man. Tyreese was always in the plan. You may have had the tiniest bit of influence on*

his profession, but just to shut you up. You named the letters page... isn't that enough?

RK,

See I like Charlie's art and all, but did anyone confuse the new girl with Lori. When she said she wanted to fuck Glenn, I was thinking about poor Rick and how he would suffer another love triangle, and then on the other hand I was calling Lori a dirty bitch and a whore the veins popping out of my head! AHHHHHHH! But then I realize after a few pages it was that new girl so can you pass on a message to Lori saying that I am truly sorry for calling her those bad things.

Now Question time with Robert Kirkman

1. Is it really true there is no more Brit?? (sad dishearted face as Lee begins to make a noose)
2. You said in issue 11 Letter Hacks that all if us can't be writing into a comic for the first time.... well just to clarify I sent my first letter to Bendis, but he didn't put it in, and also I was glad as he would of called me a Poo head or something..... But you were the second choice and that Jason Rand guy with his Small Gods is next on my hit list..... nice beard by the way :D
3. Just seen the cover to number 15, that has to be my favorite cover now! Overtaking number 4 and 7. It's just so fucking bad ass, it's unbelievable. Any chance of getting Tony to make that into a poster and selling it via Previews or your website?
4. Whats your favourite cover so far?
5. In September previews, I pre-ordered Marvel Team up signed by yourself. How long is this series going to be and why is it that image don't put up signed comics in previews? I think you will find alot of people will get a signed copy of Invincible and Walking Dead..... certainly worth the money!
6. Finally, how do you come up with these Walking Dead trade Paperback names? The first was genius and the second is just as cool..... care to spill the beans?

Anyway, until next issue so long fair well, and remember to look both ways when walking across the road!

Lee Sanders
Vindaloo

p.s. Sorry, are you going to be at San Deigo 2005??? I want to go but I hear a few aren't going. :(

I think it's clear in the dialogue of that scene that it's NOT Lori. Would Lori be talking that way about Carol? Her hair is shorter and her face is rounder but I can see how people could get them mixed up. It's not really Charlie's fault, though. It's tough in a black and white book, especially when you've got a cast of thousands.

Issue 11 and I see the "Z" word in print. Well, I guess Romero did it once, I guess you can too! Yeah, like I should tell you what to do. Back on January 1 of this year I declared to my friends that this was the "Year of the Undead" (last year was "year of the pirate" and look what happened). Thanks for proving me right. SO, now a few questions:

1. Are you really thinking about TV or is this just a far off dream? You could get a hold of a company like HBO and then have someone like JPM Productions produce effects and film it.
2. What's so bad about running zombies? Zack Snyder's "Dawn" was a great film and the fact they could run really added a long needed threat to the mix.
3. What's with all the crappy zombie books out there? Did everyone in indy comics get together and make a bet, or are you being copied a lot because of your success?
4. Have you checked out the "Zombie Hunting Society"? Really a great group of guys, but it makes me think, if a global zombie crisis arose, wouldn't there be SOMEONE who was ready?
5. Considering the above, and Max Brooks' "Zombie Survival Guide", do you have any plans to have our heroes run into anyone who IS prepared and hasn't fared as badly as they have?

That's enough for now, any more and you'll get delayed and I won't be able to blame Larsen or McFarlane or who ever is running the company this month!

Michael C. Riedlinger

Yeah, we use the "Z" word. I wasn't planning on it at first but then I just couldn't think of a reason for them NOT to call them that. That's what WE'D call them if we were suddenly overrun by the undead, so it just made sense to me for the characters to start using the "Z" word...

1. *If only it were that easy. If THE WALKING DEAD ever makes it to the small screen it'll be a good long time from now. Rest assured, you'll hear about it here first. There are always talks, so it's a possibility.*
2. *Running Zombies are like Robot Vampires, they seem really damn cool at first, and then you realize they just aren't as cool as the original idea—and that they kind of suck.*
3. *Who knows. It's just the Year of the Undead, I think. Remains is quite good. Give it a shot, I really dug it.*
4. *Never heard of them.*
5. *Only time will tell.*

And with that I'll bring this long, and EXTRA dull letters column to a close. I'll try to make next issue's a bit more lively. See you in a few weeks. Let's see if we can make it no more than three between this issue and #14.

-Robert



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Life in the prison isn't as sweet as anyone thought. I've been in a prison once, for professional reasons that included documenting an attempted escape... which included taking photos of a toilet and things that were in that toilet... and I was unsettled for the entire time I was there. So actually living in a prison? This issue documents the type of shit I'd expect to go down in a postapocalyptic prison. Anyways... Sean here, and if you haven't been checking out Dave Rapoza's connecting covers in these six issues (#13-18), what a work of art!

We'll see you next issue, and enjoy these letters from November 2004 until then.

And here we are, another month (or so) and another issue. We're running exactly four weeks behind right now (by my watch), but don't fret, we'll be remedying that situation very soon... so stop sending letters. There's about fifty books out there running later than us. I know, because I'm writing three of them! Just give us a chance, we'll make it right.

Actually, I'm quite flattered by all the "get this book out on time you lazy bastards" mail I've gotten because that means you care. Back when I was doing BATTLE POPE I used to give people eye patches for no reason and have people do all kinds of stuff for no reason just to SEE if people would write in. They never did. It allowed us a great deal of freedom with the characters, but it's nice to be working on a book people are analyzing and picking apart with a fine-toothed comb... just stop hassling us about the lateness!

Heh. Okay, I've griped enough, you guys know I love you... let's answer some mail.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Okay this book has almost been out for a year and I know you have gotten such a response to The Walking Dead. Though only you, as the god of this realm, know what is to happen, I would like to give my plea in regards to characters that I would like to see live and who I would like to see die. You did mention in one of the letters page that most of the supporting cast are cannon fodder, but still they are characters who people will begin to like or dislike.

Characters that I would really like to see survive this series as long as possible

Rick
Glenn
Andrea
Tyreese
Carol
Sophia

Characters that I would rather see stay, but if you get rid of them I will live.

Carl - see below for Lori for explanation
Julie
One of the twins (Ben)

Characters that I think should definitely be done away with are

Lori - I know it is probably not an idea that would be liked, but I think Rick really should be tested to the limit in this series. My theory is that most people are going to end up alone in their families or friends with groups of strangers.

Allen & one of the twins (Billy) - He just has got to go. We have not seen one of the kids die yet and of course that is going to be a tramatic experience. I could also see Allen killing himself with the death of one of his sons. I think the surving twin should be taken under the wing of Amy or Carol.

Dale - the old guy has got spunk, but as most of the zombie stuff show, the elderly typically just don't make it. Let him go on with his wife. Andrea just should not have it so good

Chris - he is sneaky and definitely a horndog. Don't trust him one bit and I am sure Tyreese feels the same.

Characters that we have recently met

Kill Off - Otis, Patricia, Maggie, Susie

Keep Around for awhile - Billy and Rachel

Well, keep up the fantastic work and maybe my "requests" will even influence you in some of your future stories and ideas for the characters.

Take Care,
Bill Tucker
Boston, MA

Well... as you can see by the cliffhanger over there on

the left... Julie's dead. As for the rest, you're just going to have to keep reading. I will say that there isn't ONE character that I would never kill in this book. Everyone is expendable. C'mon guys... they're not REAL! I can kill whoever I want.

Dear Guys,

Love ya work. It's been a while that I have been so eagerly awaiting something to arrive at my local comic book store sometimes the month (or More because of delays getting it to Melbourne). I originally saw walking dead when purchasing a different comic and flicked through the first couple of pages (till rick meets the bicycle zombie) I didn't have that much cash on me at the time so I left it. The weeks went by and I was in the store again and there was walking dead three, I had a bit more cash on me so I thought why not, I picked up took it home and loved it.

I Knew what I must now do go back and get 1+2 but low and behold, they had completely sold out of 2. I couldn't believe it I bought 1 anyway and thought hey can use my mind to fill in the gaps it'll still be good. It wasn't till the TPB That I knew how bad my gap filling was You totally blew all I thought of away.

As far as comparisons to "The Movie that won't be named", it's cruel and unfair because even the director of that load of crap was saying that they weren't zombies.

I wasn't quite sure what to expect from issue 8's end with "All dead inside" but with The impressive handling of all the elements So far I knew you guys would pull something that would kick ass. Loved the Character Building moments in issue 10 as well. Dale's speech to Lori, was something I hope to never forget, It showed that although Dale was old He was still on the ball and Knew what was going on and what the group needed to survive.

Now some Questions.

- 1- Will Walking Dead be set In America the whole time? I've Always wanted to see a movie or book about zombies in Australia, I guess I just have to settle for Federal Parliament for now. (Although "Undead" was kick ass I really want to see remero zombies in Oz.)
- 2- If any one movie director were to make walking dead in to a movie, Who would you want behind the camera, and
- 3- would you want them to use a script you wrote or a script that they made up themselves?
- 4- I can get my face put onto a zombie body?

I'm sure I could keep going on and on, and asking more questions but I've got to get back to my class work. Keep up the awesome work, and I eagerly Anticipate what the group is going to do about the dead in the barn.

Bye From Tom (sometimes known as ZombieChow).

Ps Have you checked out www.Livingwithzombies.com? it's a bit Like shaun of the dead.

Yeah... delays getting the book to MELBOURNE... THAT'S what's holding up the book... HONEST. It's not US, these books are shipping like clockwork in the states... it's just you. (Do you guys think he's buying this? I'm typing this part in American so he won't be able to read it.)

- 1. *TWD will be set in America the whole time. At least, that's the plan now.*
 - 2. *Why, my good pal Jed Weintrob, of course. He did a movie called On-Line that's out now on DVD. It's keen.*
 - 3. *I'd want them to use whichever was better.*
 - 4. *Call your doctor. I'm not sure.*
-

Love your mag, never wrote to a comic before (true)...blah,blah,blah.

Let's get down to business here. Yes, your book is myfavorite, by a landslide. Yes, it is amazing, fresh, creative, etc.

I must say, however, that your scheduling is inconsistent to say the least. This was a problem that plagued another great zombie book, Deadworld, and somewhat lead to its steady decline. I hope this is something that you can get control of in the near future.

The story arcs have been interesting. I am excited to see what happens next.

One point about Charlie's art- If I had never seen Moore's work I would probably love it. However , I have seen it and Charlie is just not quite as good in my humble consumer's opinion. In particular in issue 11 when the local zombies bust out of the barn I had to go back four or five times to figure out who the woman was that got eaten. Was it Hershel's daughter? No, it was his son's girlfriend , right? Hmmm... why did they look exactly alike? (perhaps you have captured the spirit of the south a little too closely here, if you know what I mean?) My point is that Charlie is pretty good but it seems he needs to take a little more time to draw these characters as distinct people.

I know I said hurry up and churn out the issues but

hey, you guys are comic-gods, surely you can work around this and meet both of my suggestions?

PS- Keep em' coming.

Brian Moore (no relation as far as I know)

Yeah, right. This is Tony's cousin isn't it? Look, I'm sorry he's off the book. Tony made his decision and I stand by him. Charlie is the best thing that ever happened to this book, quite frankly. The scene was meant to be chaotic... I like that you want to read it again to see exactly who died. Though, the son didn't have a girlfriend, so you're obviously not reading all that closely to begin with. This book is complicated, there are ten billion characters at this point and I blame myself for the confusion in that scene more than Charlie. Take your time with it, get your three dollars worth. If you try (and include the letters column) you could probably get three bathroom visits out of this thing. I don't know how this book could be more worthwhile than that. And calm down, we're a month late... it's not the end of the world.

Hey Robert & Charlie

I'm an Englishman beyond 40 & this is the second time I've written to a comic (or rather comic creators 'coz who would write to a comic, they don't write back?). The other time was to Gary Millidge Spencer who writes/draws/publishes the excellent "Stranghaven"- check it out if you get the chance. So second letter & so far wow! I was visiting friends in NC last week (I was a former resident there') & picked up a copy of "Wizard" (funnily enough only my second also - kind of a trend I think) & skimming through saw the article about the "The Walking Dead" TWD which, pardon the pun, I devoured whole-heartedly. Your book sounded excellent, the kind of story a movie should strive to be if time allowed (hey, it worked for LOTR), & also the kind of story me & my mates would play as kids. I used to live on the edge of some woods, very atmospheric & practically mist laden the entire autumn, so perfect for zombie type adventures. I digress. When I saw the Romero "Dawn of the Dead" I was amazed & petrified (although when my step kids watched a few years ago they thought it was lame - how desensitised the world has become, although I was of the generation that hid behind the sofa when the Doctor Who theme played...digressing again -you can see why I don't write to comics often). Then I caught the original B&W "Night of the living Dead" & was doubly amazed, although Dawn will always be my favourite. I enjoyed the remake, but not a patch on the original, which my wife has got me for Christmas -yay!

Anyway, before I forget why I'm writing this (& if this gets published then I guess you've got some

heavy editing to do!) (HEH, RIGHT.) I read the article about TWD & thought, I must get this comic series, but looking at the Wizard price guide decided the issues too pricey & probably hard to track down. Still, last week in Boone NC I popped into the local comic store & espied on the shelves in the Indie section TWD. Yay again! I flipped through & saw the cover price versions (some 2nd printings but what the hey - I ain't no accumulator) of 7 through to 11 & the TPB of 1 to 6. Affordable pleasure. Bought them & had 2 great nights of reading pleasure. So, finally to the point. Mr Kirkman, you & the 2 artists that have pencilled & inked (the grey-toner artist) your story have created something truly unique. I'm not much of a fan of gore for gores sake, but (another kind of pun) the violence & munching is tastefully done. It's the interraction though that gives your book the "wow-factor". Your characters are all so real. Their reactions, the moments of humour & humanity, all so telling. Very touching how Donna's scowl changed to affection at the sisters' burial. And we, the readers, just don't know who's going to get it next. Donna was a surprise as much for us as her, I guess. As for the art, I love both Tony Moore's original rendition (glad he does the covers - the fly on the eye ball reflecting the scene has got to win some cover award or something) & Charlie Adlards'. Both styles fit the book perfectly, but it's got to be your writing that gets the most kudos (whatever they are). Glad in the letters pages (that's something I miss about most comics these days is the letters & critiques & weirdness) you confirmed why the rotting female zombie in the first issue moved Rick so much.

Well, I could go on longer, but I believe I've rambled on enough. Just to say you have a masterpiece on your hands & I'm so glad I stumbled across it. I'm waiting for issue 12 to come out & hope that I haven't missed it - got my local comic shop on the case tho'.

Just before I send this, can you imagine how good it was to read the entire story so far in 2 sittings (& no nightmares!)? I'm sure you can, but let me tell you, it was one of the hilights of me trip. My trip. Mye treep.

Robert, Charlie,Cliff & Tony - I salute you. May you continue up to & beyond number 75 (I got a few ideas for those alien scenarios by the way if you run out of ideas :D)

Cheers
Jeff

PS: Like the fact that the undead also devour animals - neat little touch. You're not divulging any theories concerning how this plague of walking dead began. All well & good, as obviously the nomadic survivors wouldn't have any knowledge of the reasons, why & how.

Oh yeah, question time - sorry

1) The zombies are gradually rotting, despite the occasional munch session. But do they get any sustenance from the flesh of the living to halt the rot so to speak? What about their digestive system, or does the consumed living meat kind of get dissolved into their nervous system? In my far off childhood escape from the zombies in the woods games, my mates & I had the idea that after some nuclear attack some mutated survivors (zombies) only survived by drinking the blood & eating the flesh of the living to make up for their lack of red blood cells (or white blood cells).

2) Eventually the undead will have no flesh to carry their bones. so what happens then?

3) Will we ever find out if there are any survivors a la military/gov't? Or is that for the issues 76-99 story arc?

4) I read an article somewhere, or maybe a letter about a band of "Bad Survivors" which I can't wait for - thought the Bikers in the original Dawn of the Dead were a great touch. Is this going to happen, or did I imagine that storyline?

Appreciate your time...oh yes, before I forget again, the most touching & emotional bit of your story so far was in the early issues when Carl & his friend (can't remember the little girl's name) were playing in the mud talking about Rick returning. The hope that her own daddy would return which became the crushing realization that her daddy never would return (at least as a welcome member of the camp) actually got the old bottom lip quivering. "...I miss my daddy" sniff. Who'd'a thought a comic about zombies (the only thing that truly scares me - something quite horrific about being eaten alive - other than raw sewage when you're swimming in the ocean) can actually mist the eyes. Great book guys, great book.

Man, I thought I was DONE, and then I get to the "P.S." Jeez, man, you've got a lot of time on your hands there.

1) It's more impulse than anything. I doubt any of those things have any kind of working digestive system.

2) We'll just have to wait and see. That's what makes this book so fun. There will be new zombies getting made ALL THE TIME as the population continues to dwindle, but, yeah... eventually... well... you'll see.

3) We'll just have to wait and see.

4) There's going to be a LOT of "bad survivors" as the book goes on.

Hi Robert, I'm really enjoying the book. Just finished №12 and I'm intrigued by the upcoming prison storyline.

One thing I'm curious about is the geography of their trip so far. They started out in the RV in Atlanta, is that correct? And they're headed west, or north-west (I'm really just guessing here)? I'm reasonably well-traveled myself, and the one point that seems obvious is that, when they're travelling in the RV, too much of the story's time is spent in empty, or rural, surroundings. Nearly any small road or state road would have them passing through loads of small and mid-sized towns through each day of travel. In regards to their search for food, for example, there would be lots of little downtowns with closely clustered houses and buildings where they could score canned food, etc. In this issue we see the remains of the general store, diner & the gas station sign—but there are no houses. The general store implies downtown but there doesn't really seem to be any.

Another way to look at it would be to put the diner and store in a spot, say a few miles between two towns and at an intersection of two state roads crossing each other. That'd be a logical place for a few businesses. Then that raises the question why aren't they going into the small towns looking for food? The businesses all seem to be mostly looted, so the pantries in individual houses would be the next best spot to find food. Granted, there'd be more danger in a town with a formerly higher population density; but when the stomach is growling I suspect it'd seem like both a rational and obvious solution to their most immediate dilemma. Instead they're literally just walking through the woods hoping to stumble onto something. And whudda-ya-know, the groundwork for a whole new story arc emerges as they get to the top of the hill. I understand that they needed to stumble onto the prison somehow (and also to have a fitting climax to the eventual trade paperback release), but they could have noticed the 'prison zone: do not pick up hitch-hikers' sign on the road while driving away from a more sensible attempt at getting food. Or something like that.

All criticisms aside, a map detailing their journey so far might make for an attractive supplement to add to the trade paperback. I understand that your primary interest in this story seems to be the human drama, but I can't help but be curious as to the state of the world around them, and more details would be great.

One more question, do you find market pressures having much effect on the direction and pacing of your stories? I'm referring specifically to the need to have neat six issue story arcs that work so well in the trade paperback market. Since I've just criticized your transition from what I believe will be the end of paperback №2 into the beginning of

paperback №3, I'm curious if you're aware of any differences in how you'd tell the story if you didn't have to deal with such considerations.

When I sat down to write this letter I wasn't envisioning it as a critical letter, though it seems to be what it's become. So I will mention again that I am really enjoying this book. You seem to have created a unique hybrid of genres that offer seemingly endless possibilities of future storytelling. Such creativity is much needed in this industry. The Walking Dead is light entertainment, for sure, but it's fresh, and it engages the imagination more effectively than the overwhelming majority of the books it shares shelf space with. And that's just about right for me.

Thanks, and good luck with all your projects,
Patrick Sullivan

They're still in Georgia. They've been traveling Southwest, but they're probably only an hour or two out of Atlanta right now. They haven't traveled very far. They've had to stop and find gas and stop and move cars so much that they haven't traveled very far at all. I should probably have illustrated that a little better. It'll all be clear next issue. I'll see what I can do.

I don't think writing this book in loose six-issue arcs is restricting at all. All I really have to do to make something SEEM like an arc is end every sixth issue with some sort of final resolution or turning point... and that'll just help me keep the plot jumping. If you look at issues #7-12 they're just stories told in order, there's no arc to them at all, really, aside from the "looking for a place to live" theme. Maybe the way they found the prison just sucks, I might have done it differently now that I've seen it in print, but they got there—that's the important part. I can always do better next time.

Zombiologists,

See, this is why I love this book.

Any other writer would have wrapped Hershel's reaction in a nice wrapper, and secured it with a bright bow. All clean and pretty. No muss, no fuss. Two or more characters, in wonderfully in-depth and intelligent monologues would have explained to me and the rest of the heathen, uneducated masses, exactly why Hershel did what he did, and then resolved the entire situation like some classic 80's sitcom where everyone is laughing as the credits roll.

No, not this book. For some reason you guys actually struggle under the conception that some of us know how to tie our shoelaces, and wipe our noses when they run.

Life isn't always pretty. It can't be summed up,

and explained. People aren't predictable. People are complicated puzzles that just fall to pieces in unforeseeable ways. Thanks for being perhaps the only book I know of that let's it all be messy. Thanks for not ruining the trauma of witnessing a man fall apart with some condescending explanation.

Or did he fall apart? Maybe we didn't know him at all. Maybe he was just a closet asshole all along. Thanks for not painting it by the numbers. It hurts to do so, but I enjoy thinking when I read.

And thanks for that little touch of tiny Carl drawing his weapon. Priceless. Beautifully understated. Disturbing and poignant, all at once.

And I'm not just stroking you, Rob. Your "perty" words would fall short without Charles and Cliff. All of the above works because of the whole zombiologist crew.

Group hug?

'til issue 13 (next week, really?),
Chip

I'm so pleased that so many of you noticed the bit with Carl pulling out his gun. I was worried that most people wouldn't catch on to exactly what was going on there. Thanks for the kind words, Chip. I think we'll make some more.

When I was a young boy and first saw Night of the Living Dead..... It scared the living hell out of me. Plus it did not help it was also Halloween night and we were living next to a graveyard at the time.

It would be some years before I could even summon up the nerve to even watch any of the sequels. Which also traumatized me in their own imitable fashion.

Now however where I've reached an age when I can appreciate zombie horror, I feel very lucky to have a book like The Walking Dead coming out. For the first time I feel someone is doing a zombie comic right.

It's great to seeing how these people lives change month to month. Not to mention how cope and survive in a world that overrun with the walking dead.

I just finished issue 12 and it's great to hear sales are strong. I look forward to seeing this book for years to come. It was interesting to note at the end of issue 12 that our intrepid band are going to be seeking refuge in a prison. In an off beat way It reminded me of Len Barnhart's novel Reign of the Dead in which the occupants of that story also hold up in a prison.

Great minds think alike.

Just as long as they do not hold up in a shopping mall...

Peace
Eric L. Busby

Well, if people start writing in complaining that this book is getting to be too much like Reign of the Dead, I'll have them go to a shopping mall... with aliens. You have been warned.

Robert Kirkman,

God-damn-son-of-a-bitch, I done shit myself again. A prison? That is a stroke of genius, one of those honest to god "Why didn't I think of that" moments, perfect.

Is there anything worse then walking in on your daughter after she had a night of kinky sex? Well, I guess walking in less then 24 hours after a good chunk of your family had been put in the ground would be. Hershel is one of the most sympathetic characters I have seen in print since the Nam comic back at Marvel. The shit he has gone through in the last couple days and then Rick wanting to move into his dead sons room combined with Lori going loco on him, I was right there with him in venting his anger. And then you leave poor Hershel there, sitting on the ground having a complete breakdown while the Mystery Van pulls out for more adventures. Damn.

Glenn, you shall be missed. You were my girlfriends favorite character but she understands the need to get some as often as you can, good luck - hope Maggie doesn't go crazy on you. Unless you are into that sort of thing.

Keep up the good work guys, looking forward to issue thirteen!

-Matthew Szewczyk

As you can see, we have not seen the last of Hershel, Glenn, Otis, or the rest of that crew. Not by a long shot.

Dear Storyteller of Warm Fuzzy Tales,

WD №12 - 2 comments

Comment №1 - Seeing the gang getting excited over the jail reminded me of the old joke about cemeteries and people dying to get in. Well, jails are places people usually want out of so you kind of created the opposite effect there. Which is good

and all but I'm not sure I would want to live in a jail - zombie world or not. But we'll see how it goes and there could be great chances for meaningful symbolism there.

Comment №2 - Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), was an artist who was pretty clever and sometimes when asked where his art exhibit was...he would say oh it is right here in my head. I know you ain't gonna make any fans zombies so I decided in the spirit of Duchamp to make myself the zombie on the basketball court in that big jail scene in WD№12. So nana-boo-boo...

Brendan Walsh

Dude, I told Charlie to draw you as the zombie on the basketball court. That's so weird. In fact, all the zombies on the prison grounds were everyone who got a letter printed in issue #8... and you.

Hi, Kirkman!

FINALLY, issue 12 is out! It seems like so long since I got to read anything dead...

Another fine issue from you and your team. I'm glad to see everybody moving off the farm. I'll be sad to see Glenn left behind, but I'm really glad to be rid of Hershel. He was really starting to turn into an ass! I can't believe he pulled a gun on Rick after trying to throw them out. Hershel really seems wrapped up in himself... It's hard to believe that this is the same guy who went out of his way to help Carl. It was good to see him admit that he may be losing his mind, which actually made me feel a little sad for him, but not too much... He was just such an ass to everybody!

I especially loved the panel showing Carl pulling out his gun following Hershel's fight with Rick. It seems like none of the characters noticed it, but it's becoming obvious that killing Shane and Rick giving him a gun have made shooting people seem okay to Carl in certain situations. I really thought he was going to shoot Hershel in this issue, but it looks like we're building to him shooting someone else down the line, even more unexpectedly maybe... This should be a very interesting development for the group, especially with Rick trying to give everyone guns to protect themselves...

I do have to say, I was a little disappointed in how the "gun to Rick's head" concept on the cover played out within the issue. I know you explained how the covers are supposed to be iconic and not literal, but they still convey a certain idea that I expect to see. On the cover, it looks like Rick is set up execution-style with the gun to the back of his head. I expected someone to be threatening him - maybe a new character that just discovered

the farm holding Rick hostage until he got some food or weapons or something... What ended up happening was completely different from what I expected. While the story itself wasn't disappointing, the fact that it didn't fit my expectations kind of was. I'll just have to try not to expect too much based on your covers, since I don't expect you to change your cover concepts (which are very cool when not trying to link them to the story too literally).

I'm looking forward to Rick and co. taking over the prison they've just found. The next issue or two should be pretty action packed with zombies galore. That should be lots of fun... I'm a little worried about them staying at the prison for a long time, like you said they would in "Letter Hacks." It seems like staying in one place could get a little stale after a while. I actually liked the fact that they had to keep moving around, and I'm really glad you expanded your original plan for issue 7 to a six issue arc. Everything from moving into what looked like an abandoned development through their time at the farm has been extremely entertaining. If you hadn't told us how you expanded it, I never would have thought that this was a last-minute decision because it was done so well. Anyway, having them on the move was one of the things I thought was pretty interesting, so keeping them in one place seems like it could be a bit of a letdown. However, I'm sure you'll have plenty of problems in store for them while they're living within the prison walls, no matter how long they stay there..

On another note, in "Letter Hacks," you mentioned that letting us know that sales increased pisses people off. Are you actually getting complaints about this? I don't remember seeing this in any of the letters you've printed. I just don't understand that mindset. I love hearing about your sales numbers, and knowing that this book has a strong chance to survive for a long, long time (maybe even after the aliens enter the picture). Why wouldn't people want to know this? I'd even like to know if sales start to drop, so I can do my part to save it by buying a handful of extra copies...

Anyway, thanks for another great issue, and thanks for printing my letter in it.. That's the first time that's happened to me despite a handful of letter I've written in the past. It was kind of exciting to see my name printed in a comic for the first time... and in one of my favorite ones, to boot!

Jim Amato

Would you really want a story to be exactly what you're expecting it to be? For my money... I'd want it to be completely different... unless it was a Matrix movie. The covers are meant to represent events in

the story, but not always in a way that represents them accurately. I want to fool you into expecting something... and then shock you. Like in issue #13... if you look at the cover, you'd have no clue that Andrea actually helped Tyreese and Rick shoot those zombies. Wasn't that shocking?

Things won't be stagnant just because they're in the prison for a while. Trust me. Everything in the book so far has been to get to this point. We're not even close to the WAR yet... there's lots of exciting stuff coming up. I've got lots of long term plans here. Just because I've stated that there's not a planned ending, doesn't mean I don't have years worth of things planned for this book.

Dear Letter Hacks,

Two issues one week after the next! Damn, life can be good sometimes!

The story has just been on a non-stop rise since the book started! Every issue takes a new turn, and dives deeper into the characters. You start to get the feeling that you know them like your family. Hershel giving them the boot in issue №12 was pretty nuts, but I shoulda figured he had a few screws too many loose, I mean who the hell keeps a barn of dead people and is sane? Than they find the prison and just mow a helluva lotta 'em down in 13! Good stuff. Charlie's been getting better with each issue that turns out, and we can't leave Cliff/Tony hanging, awesome tones and covers! Any idea what issue Lori's gonna be due? That should prove to be an interesting scene between her and Rick. That's about it for this month, keep it up! Looking forward to the next issue!

-Mike Storniolo

I was afraid I wasn't going to hear from you this month, Mike. You just got in under the wire. Now, if only that Piers guy would get back to consistently writing the letters. I miss him... I really do.

Lori's baby will be in the oven for a few more issues. She's not very pregnant yet. She's just now showing.

And with that... we're done. Thanks go out to everyone who wrote in. See you here next month. #15 should be out in January (no matter what that ad says in the back), and then from there on we should be shipping a little faster than monthly until we're caught up. If we can pull it off, Charlie and I want to ship issues #25-30 bi-weekly, but we'll see if we can pull that off by next summer.

-Robert



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

I hope you enjoyed one of the most traumatic TWD issues to date. We start with a failed murder-suey, move onto the mercy killing of a zombie, then end with double child murder. It reads as prelude to some the much darker days ahead, as the worst of humanity begins to emerge. We'll see you later this month for the continuation of the prison saga! Until then, check out these classic Hacks.

Issue #15! Not really much to say this time out. Charlie and Cliff do their usual bang up job. Tony's provided a SWEET cover.

Dear Kirkman,

So they found a prison to move into. I wondered how long our heroes would be hunter-gatherers roaming the zombie wasteland. I finally thought of a complaint! Every time I write you I spend like an hour trying to figure out something bad to say about this book. You just make it too damn hard.

But here's the complaint - One of the coolest things about Romero's movies (and even the Dawn remake) was the news reports. News anchors incredulously reading that the dead are returning to life and attacking the living, debates over whether or not these people are any longer our family and friends, and new to the Dawn remake - reporters getting eaten in the field (good stuff). Now obviously, our group has missed all those fun preliminary reports and by this point, they'd be lucky to turn on a TV and see a test pattern. It's always great to see how the world falls apart. Maybe they can find newspapers or something that lets everyone know that the rest of the world is as screwed as they are.

Ok, not much of a complaint, but you don't give us much to go on. I feel like I should gripe about your other books like Jubilee or something. Come on! She has a good power! When the hell did everyone decide she's worthless? Early on, she was able to take out sentinels. Remember how great she was in AoA? Ok sorry. Back to zombies.

As great as it seems, having our group locked up in a prison doesn't scream fun zombie drama to me. How many issues can you keep it going? Either they will repel a zombie assault every few issues, turn to in-fighting (seems likely with a certain couple of members), or live out their lives in an extremely dull fashion. However, you're the man, so I'm sure that Invincible crossover and alien invasion are still far far in the distant future. But seriously, if Tyreese starts flying a helicopter and Rick teams up with him to solve murders...

Lotsa Love,
Chris Pitts

I think I've said it here before. The majority of stuff you'd see in the first days of a zombie holocaust are in most every zombie movie. That's why I skipped it in this book. I have been coming up with some cool ideas for things to do in that time period... so maybe you'll see something along those lines soon. This is all a moot point however, because starting with next issue, Tyreese starts flying a helicopter and he and Rick team up to solve murders... so you'll be quitting the book in short order.

Mr. Kirkman,

Greetings and salutations and congratulations on your success, especially within Marvel and with The Walking Dead.

Like many, I'm a longtime zombie fan, with particular love for the Romero films, the Resident Evil game and the All Flesh Must Be Eaten role-playing game. You are putting out a damn fine comic, sir. One of my three favorite monthlies... as they are all so close, I can't differentiate. The other two are New Thunderbolts and Astonishing X-Men, if you care.

One thing kinda bugged me about No.12, and I was wondering if I was the only one that noticed...Rick got incredibly cranky when Herschel kicked them out, but after Carl was shot, Herschel plainly said they were welcome to stay "while the boy gets better." In fact, the

whole group was present when he said it, outside of Carl himself. It's one thing to take the kindness for granted, but they actually ignored what he said and just decided to stay. That just ain't right.

I'll be nice and not mention that a recent sourcebook for the All Flesh Must Be Eaten RPG had a story hook about a group of survivors fortifying a prison against zombies since, after all the 28 Days Later stuff, I'm sure you're REALLY tired of stuff like that.

Keep up the fantastic work. Whenever I show up to get my comics and see the Walking Dead, well, it just makes my day a whole lot brighter.

Tommy Brownell

I'm sure Rick was a bit flustered over Carl getting shot and was only half paying attention to Hershel. Rick just didn't expect to be thrown out into the wilderness. Luckily, it all seemed to turn out for the better--until this issue. Yeah, sourcebook, whatever. There's so much zombie story material out there between the movies, games, novels, and fan-fiction that I think every logical scenario as far as safe places has been done. This book is more about character interaction that's where the real action is. So I more or less just try to focus on that. If stuff's similar, I trust it's only marginal at best.

WOW! Simon Pegg reads your comic!!!

Hey, I've had a letter IN The Walking Dead.. and Simon Pegg READS The Walking Dead, so basically... I KNOW Simon Pegg!!! WICKED!

Thanks Robert Kirkman!!! I'm going to give Simon a call now...

Sincerely,
Daniel Harrison

P.S. Oh yeah, issue 12 was great too, just gre-SIMON PEGG, MY BUDDY!

Ask him for a loan. The man is LOADED, I tell you. He's always emailing me saying "Yeah, the man with the million dollar movie is going to email you, COME ON!" Then I'm always like "You JUST emailed me dude... you're not making sense." Then he says "Yeah, the man with the billion dollar movie isn't making any sense,

COME ON!" He's a wacky, rich, wacky dude... and he's totally rich.

Letter Hacks!

Yesterday I got about halfway through the letters column in issue 12, and I stopped for a moment. After the fifty millionth person wrote in with:

A. I just picked up the first TWD trade and I love your book

B. You should totally see "Shaun of the Dead"

C. I miss Tony's work, yet i also enjoy Charlie's...

I thought, why the frick do I spend so much time reading these letters? So many pages...surely I have better things to do, yes? I finally realized that I do it because I just don't want the book to end. I get to the end of an issue and I get all mad that it's over and I have to wait a month for more. So I read pages of letters from people who feel the same way, and that helps ease the pain. Well, that and sweet, sweet liquor.

Stacie Ponder

How do you think I feel? I have to read and respond to this shit! Do you know how many times I see "I've never written to a comic before" and "Do you know George Romero?" It's getting to be more than I can stand. Every time I think about not doing the letters column I get a bunch of people saying how much they love it... and it's all the same shit... over and over!!! Except for this month. This month is different.

Hey Rob, Tony, Charlie and Cliff,

Wow! That was an amazing ride! So many deaths to characters! I can't believe Glen has left, he was a cool guy, he saved Rick and was just a great addition to the pack. Well that leaves me wondering when we will see him and his girl again and whether we'll see the father and son from Issue 1. Can you drop a hint for those please? The strain is definitely getting to the characters, number one priority is just to survive, so much for missing the old necessities in life! That was way too cool to see that Simon Pegg had written in, I am a massive fan of his

- I recommend importing DVDs of his sitcom 'Spaced', it's totally awesome and any UK fans out there will agree!

The prison is an awfully big place - a secure one but big - does this mean it could be a new haven for survivors? A small community for the new dead world? I hope so. I hate it when they're always on the move. I hope the ideas aren't running too thin either, not that I think they are, I just hope you get past Issue 75! Finally, a couple of questions:

- 1) Will we be seeing Glen and the guys from Issue 1 again?
- 2) Will there be any gangs like in the original Dawn of the Dead just raiding the place?
- 3) Will we be getting a glimpse of life before someone turns into a zombie as the plague occurs only to end with them being killed by Rick or someone (like the remake of Night of the Living Dead)?
- 4) What do you think of the rumoured Flight of the Dead film? Sounds sucky if you ask me.
- 5) Oh and what do you think of calling the prison James Ellis Memorial State Penitentiary? (Didn't think so...)

Thanks again for such a cool comic book, you really are making it big here in the UK! Come over and do a signing sometime at Forbidden Planet in London!

From James Ellis, UK

- 1) *You'll be seeing the guys from issue #1, but not Glenn—or maybe it's the other way around. I'll have to check my notes.*
- 2) *Stay tuned.*
- 3) *Do you mean like Jim in issue #6? We saw him before he turned.*
- 4) *Any idea can be done well, it depends on the execution. Sounds like it could be as cool as "ALIEN" if they do it right.*
- 5) *Didn't get this until I read your name. YEAH, that's going to be the name of the prison, congrats!*

With everything that has been coming out zombie wise these days (Remains, The Death of Death, Night of the living Dead Barbara's Zombie Chronicles) The Walking Dead stands head and shoulders above the rest. Which is saying a lot considering The Death of Death is written by the king, Romero himself.

This title always delivers a damn fine story every month. But what did we get this month? One week after issue 12 comes out. Bang here's 13. And boy this one was packed to the gills with zombies. Damn fine stuff.

Although the first four pages seemed to get repeated in my copy for some reason. Must have been one of those fucking time loop things I keep hearing about on Art Bell. Ahh well it was still a damn fine story and I am looking forward to 14.

Any chance that's coming out next week???????

Eric L. Busby

Hmmmm...repeated pages, doesn't seem like such an isolated thing now... at least among people who write in to letters columns. The Death of Death appearing in Toe Tags isn't the best zombie book, I'll admit. I love George, I mean it, I LOVE GEORGE but I can't make heads or tails of that stuff. I haven't read much of Barbara's Zombie Chronicles but Mark Kidwell has been on friend of mine for years and he's got some great ideas for the book so I'm sure it's cool.

Just writing to throw another, your zombie stories are better than Romero's on the pile. You seemed to doubt that in the last letters column when someone wrote it, but it's true. Romero is very important to the genre, and was the first to do a lot of things, granted, but I just don't think his work stands the test of time. Also, have you read the couple of issues of Toe Tags that have come out so far? What a horrible waste of my time and money.

You've got the goods here with Walking Dead. I really just miss Terry's art honestly. No offense to Mr. Adlard, he's a good artist, and honestly his art does suit the genre, but I felt so much more connected to the characters through Terry's art. I will never get over that, unfortunately. I will always wonder issue by issue what it would have looked like had he done them. It probably wouldn't have been an issue if the switch didn't happen, and we just started

with Charlie's art, but I got hooked on Terry. Terry's art made the whole series seem more adventurous, while Charlie's makes everything seem more horror/dark. I'm more of an adventure guy. Terry's covers on the first two issues were actually what initially brought me to Walking Dead, but enough about that.

Up until the Characters left the farm I haven't had any problems at all with the storytelling in Walking Dead, but I did take issue with how abrupt that was. I like that you padded that whole story out to be a multi-issue arc, and I think it deserved something more complete. I mean, I was really emotional, with tears and everything when the Hershel had the gun to Rick's head, that was so well done, and to skip from that to them getting in the RV wasn't enough for me. The rhythm was off.

Other than that though, great work. I'm so glad that I took a chance on this new book last year, and am really happy to see that my local shops have actually started to carry the title as of issue 12! Here's to your continued success and the HBO original series we all want to see happen!

joe annabi

Nothing contained in this book is close to the genius of Romero's three movies. That's a fact. Terry was too busy with Strangers in Paradise and just had to go. I'm sorry you missed him. His cousin Tony is really doing a bang-up job on the covers, though. As far as the pacing in issue #12 goes, hey--you win some, you lose some, at the end of the day, you just gotta pick yourself up and keep moving. Sorry you didn't like it. You gotta admit... it's still better than Toe Tags.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Firstly let me congratulate you on a great comic, one of my favorites in recent memory. Not to be a snob but I feel that I have quite good taste in comics, and read stuff like Planetary, Sleeper, Y-the last man, Love Fights and Queen and Country...and I would have to say you are easily an equal amongst those peers.....

I was going to write to you with a wee complaint about how I felt that TWD was getting a little stale in that I was tired of what seemed to be the routine of go somewhere, get someone new join the gang, get surprised by some zombies then kill someone off....I was

quite shocked when Carl got shot, but also a tad disappointed that you decided to off another character..I felt you where falling into a routine (despite the high standard of writing that was present in this pattern)...but then the whole farm sequence picked things up for me and changed the pace...and the final panel with the prison gave me hope for some change....which you basically reinforced in your intro to the letters section of 12. Now that I have read 13 and seen the great ending I am please to say that my fears have been put to rest.

I do have one comment left and a question - my comment being related to Y-the last man, another great read with a past apocalyptic theme (although of course totally different than yours). I know you have stated that you never intend to explain the cause of the zombies, and if you decide not to that is fine by me, but one aspect the YTLM that I like is the subtle hints and small flashbacks that are interspersed into the main plot that give the reader some insight about what happened to the world outside of the world of the main characters.....I am not asking you to explain things, but I think a little more background info, whether through flashbacks or exposition, could broaden out understanding of what happened to the rest of the country/ world after the dead awoke.....

The question I had was how do you approach writing each issue. One thing that strikes me as much as the writing is the pacing and panel layout of the comics, always excellent and I was wondering if you plan out each issue panel by panel in meticulous detail a la Alan Moore, or do you give the artist free reign with a more basic script that includes dialogue and basic descriptions??

Alex Davies

Man, the day I start taking tips from Brian K. Vaughan and Y: The Last Man is when I throw in the towel. Talk about an amateurish piece of rubbish. You want that, go read his book. I--I just can't turn this into a joke. I like BKV, he's a swell dude. Sexy like a girl, too. Don't let the bald head fool you, that dude's pretty. In TWD I want to stay on the central cast. I don't WANT to explore the world without the main characters. I want you to experience it with them. I think it's more fun that way. My scripts describe each panel and a basic layout but Charlie usually does his own thing layout-wise and I'm not NEARLY as detailed with my descriptions as Alan is. I don't have TIME to do all that work!

Mr. Kirkman,

As a new fan of The Walking Dead, I wanted to take the opportunity to tell you how much I truly enjoy your comic. I still can't believe how fast I read through the first and second volumes of the TPBs as well as issue 13; I was totally engrossed with the story and art from the beginning and I can't wait to read the next issue! Damn, I couldn't have asked for a better story about survival and killing zombies! It's very refreshing to read a comic where I feel I can relate to the characters' emotions/actions because they are, at heart, ordinary human beings ... as opposed to other comics I read featuring characters with super/mutant powers.

I have a few questions for you. I really liked Glenn as he was the one character from the ever-changing group that I related to the most; will we ever see him again? Why didn't the group ever try to stock-up at Wal-Mart? ... I know there's a shitload of Wal-Marts in the south and I guess that's where I would have tried to go first. Are they ever going to find a better or more creative way to kill zombies? I like the gunshots and hammer blows to the head and all, but I'm kinda hoping they electrify the prison fence or something.

Anyway, I really love this book! Truly amazing work, please keep it up!

Charles Fincher

Travel is very hard in this world. Rick and crew haven't traveled all that far from the Atlanta camp site, as seen here. Moving cars out of the road would sometimes take all day... and most of the roads they traveled were blocked at many points. They just haven't run into any Wal-Marts on their way. I'm sure they'll come across one sooner or later, though.

Hey Mr. Kirkman

I feel like a rube for calling you mister, because it doesn't come off like you are the "Call me Mister Tibbs" type. If you are, I'll call you Mister Kirkman while playing some Mr. Mister if you'd like. I'd just like to take the time to thank you for writing this book.

I work at Geoffrey's Comics out in L.A. and

my manager was telling me how great the book was, but I kind of brushed it away as a hack and slash book. I didn't get around to reading your series until after issue №11 came out. It won me over with a single page. I opened it up and read Hershel talking about how his son got zombified and couldn't bring himself to kill him. This is exactly what I've been looking for in any medium, print or visual, a fusion of brain and heart and emotion and not a big boob bangaroo gore throwaway piece of pulp. I'm a big fan of the survivalist genre; anything from the Stand, to Battle Royale to (now) Walking Dead.

It has just started to dawn on me how well zombology (to borrow from Mr. Pegg) fits into the survivalist genre, because not only does it provide the chaos but it also makes everything more maddening because (many times) there is no solid answer to why zombies are walking the earth, save for the old "no more room in hell" adage. People are looking for ways to survive, but they are also looking for answers.

After reading issue №11, I went right ahead and bought every single issue before it and awaited №12 like a drug fix. Luckily for me, I picked a perfect time to come into your book, because number 12 and 13 came out back to back. I also managed to get the first 6 issues autographed because my manager went to your booth at the San Diego Comic Con.

My, and the store's, love for Walking Dead is so vast, we offer money back guarantees on all Walking Dead trades. We are that sure that people will like it and in all our time of doing that, not a single person has ever returned any of your trades. It brings joy to me to find comics that are this well done (Ditto for Invincible, by the way, but that's a gushfest for another letter).

It's a goal for us here at Geoffrey's to eventually get you in for a signing, but there is that whole matter of 2000 miles of distance between California and Kentucky. But, whenever you are in the L.A. area, I'm sure there will be at least 2 people here willing to offer and appendage or two to even make you coming by a remote possibility.

I'd be an honor to get a letter back from you. Continue doing what you do best, writing comics. Here's to an epic run of both your books. And thank you for injecting some much needed humor in Marvel Team Up.

Your Fan, (but not in the stalker kind of way)
Moris Machuca

Next time I'm going to be in LA I'll try to remember to contact you guys. It's always good to hear from retailers. Especially the ones who've have success offering money back guarantees on their books. I'm a big supporter on returnable books and taking some heat of the retailer in this industry and if there was a way to do it, I'd try to make all my books returnable. To see so many of you guys taking your burden one step further in making a book returnable to YOU really warms my heart. Thanks.

Dear Letter Hacks,

Foremost I would like to congratulate you on this great new series you have in The Walking Dead. It has been awhile since I feverishly chase titles at my local comics store and I have not picked up an Image title since the Mage series. I am a huge fan of the zombie genre (Romero is a God to me) and you don't know how grateful I am that you can give me a zombie fix every month. To put my dedication into perspective, this is the first time I have felt inspired enough to ever write to any title and I have even been inspired enough to march around some of my horror fans/comic book fan buddies with the first Walking Dead trade paper-back and let them borrow it for days at a time. You have made a book that not since Preacher I have been so outstandingly of a fanboy, and for this I want to thank you.

I also want to say how great of a job Charlie Adlard has done filling in the huge boots of Tony Moore. I met Tony at the Mid-Ohio Comic Convention while he was drawing some fiendish ghouls and he was a very cool person. His covers are first class and if I remember correctly at the comic con I think I compared his characters' facial expressions with that of Steve Dillon's style. And Charlie Adlard's hands are more than capable hands. And that is one hell of a compliment.

There is only one flaw I have thought about when reading your book (one flaw to my nit-picking eyes truly means something). Where's all the cigarettes, marijuana, and booze? I mean come on, out of all your characters not one smokes cigarettes. I smoke occasionally but I know if I was in a post-

apocalyptic world infested with zombies, I would be raiding stores for cigarettes almost before raiding the gun store! And in most of Romero's movies (i.e. Dawn of the Dead and Day of the Dead) some characters range from drinking an occasional beer to being dependent on a flask of liquor. Don't you think as stressful of a situation they are in AND the fact that the characters probably dipped in the occasional drink every once in awhile, that they would maybe be drinking more? Or in your post apocalyptic world does zombie infestation means no drinking as well? I think it would be hilarious to see Rick's response to a character lighting up a fat doobie too. After all, he was a former cop (I guess he still is) and I think it would be even cooler to see Rick's reaction to some GROWN marijuana by one of those guys they just met in that prison facility. In our world today people can't even seem to deal with the real world without alien substances and it seems ridiculous that in a zombie infested world there would be in substances abused.

Despite the aforementioned you have put together my favorite new series and The Walking Dead is particularly a treat to a person infatuated with the zombie horror movie genre and comic books as well. I will forever be running around trying to promote your work. If you are from the Central Ohio area you should visit Midgard Comics, a great local comic store of Columbus, Ohio that first introduced me to this series! Thanks for my monthly zombie fix and keep up the good work!

Jim Donaldson

Yeah, I keep meaning to work in some smoking and drinking and I always run out of room. There are a couple smokers in the book for sure but they ran out of cigarettes before we met up with them. It'll be touched on soon, I promise. It is kinda odd that we've gone 15 issues now without one mention of booze or cigarettes. I'm a bit of a hack, I admit.

Letter Hacks,

Yeah! Great ending to issue 13! Actually, just another great issue full stop. Really looking forward to finding out what these four convicts are all about. I've been on board since the first issue as I luckily stumbled across The Walking

Dead in Previews, and thought I'd check it out being a big zombie and in particular Romero fan. I was hoping that maybe this could be a good take on the subject matter. It turns out that your comic was everything I hoped for and more! Since then you've kept up the level of quality and I'm happy to see how much acclaim you've achieved recently. And after my initial disappointment upon reading of Tony Moore's departure on pencils, I think Mr. Adlard has really made the book his own over the last 7 issues with his and Mr. Rathburn's dark and somewhat creepy style of art. Well done all! Glad to hear you liked Shaun of the Dead, it was a great film. Not too sure about the 'acting like zombies and walking straight into the horde' thing though, kind of like in issue 4 how Rick's 'smell theory' worked. I always thought these soulless creatures have some other way of knowing.... And with regards to requests of you doing one-shots showing how different people reacted to the outbreak, or showing what's going on in other places, I think the beauty of this book is that these characters are on this journey and you're on it with them, in order for the reader to find out what's going on elsewhere, these characters must first. Are you a fan of the Resident Evil games? Code Veronica was cool it had some nice plot developments. Too bad the films were so lame... OK enough babble. Good luck with your future endeavors, and glad to see you on board at Marvel (So long as this book doesn't suffer - but I have faith in you my man :)

All the best,
Geo

Did you say a movie with Milla Jovovich is LAME?! How DARE you! The woman has never made a bad move, by virtue that she's in them all! How can you NOT like Resident Evil. It has ZOMBIES and MILLA. A man would have to pop out of the screen and punch you to make that movie anything less than completely enjoyable.

RK

Okay, nice end to issue 12 Robert. Nice happy and promising one. Compared to the death and demise of the late Shane. Was definitely a shame to see young Glenn stay behind. I realize this may be to pave the way for new blood (evil laughter) But I do hope we may

see Glenn later on down the road to see how he's doing. Now myself and my good friend Tim were talking about the possibly of inmates still being in the prison. Now, thinking about the Walking Dead timeline, a lot of time has passed. 7 months at least, and I would be shocked to see inmates still alive in those conditions. Can't be good in there. But then we discussed about how some people being in their cells and not let out, and starving to death. Is quite a nasty thought really, and most likely make it into the book. So, after that exciting end to the second arc of The Walking Dead, I await next week for Walking Dead №13. Okay so its now nearly two weeks after it's out and its in the post some where... can't wait to see if these theories are right though!

Untill next time Robert! Pooflakes :D

Lee Sanders
Englishland

P.S. Saw the solicitations for Walking Dead №17. What a cool cover. Reminded me of the Kill Bill scenes where the Bride met the other members of the hitman group. And the line "Rick Snaps" Sweet! But yet I worry we will see spoilers in the next issue solicitations! And find out more about it before 17 hits the shelves. Must be hard for you, but your doing a fantastic job!

P.P.S. Cool about the Simon Pegg letter. He totally kicks ass way back to the old stuff he did (spaced being one of the best) Can't wait to see his next film which is apparently an action film (Like Shaun but action) So if he's reading this, you rule dude!

P.P.P.S. If I sent a photo would you put it in the letters column? :D

What's a poof lake?

The solicitations may seem to give things away, and sometimes they do, so don't read them if you don't want to know... but they are ALSO great tools for misdirection. No, I will NOT print a photo of you here.

And then be back here next month to see everyone saying: "Who cut off them girls heads?"

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Man, this a TOUGH issue, as the discovery of the twins' zombified heads still sends chills down my spine. BUT it also features the payoff to Tyreese's most iconic moment, and really cemented him as a fan favorite. Perhaps our favorite characters are just defined by whoever gets to live? Shane is memorable, but maybe if he'd lived, he would've become even more popular than Negan. Imagine that! Anyways, check out these old school letters that first saw print back in February 2005!

Welcome to issue #16. Lots of big stuff is going down in this issue and the upcoming issues, so I hope you guys are enjoying the ride. We've got some major changes in store for the book so hold on tight!

Now, let's answer some mail.

"What the devil? Convicts!"

Thank you. I've always wanted an excuse to use that line from Broadway's famous "My Three Angels", and now I have.

And thanks for letting Glenn settle down with Maggie. She's decent, unlike her insane old craphead father, Hershel. Don't try to make excuses for him, either. Unless you're going to write "Hershel's Big Redemption Scene" down the road, and try to make me like him, like you did with Donna, and then kill him off. Which is fine, because I'm not going to fall for it this time, smart guy. While you're revisiting Hershel, don't be afraid to throw in some more Glenn sex scenes. As long as Hershel's not in them.

I'm enjoying the scenes with Lori being pissed off. Nice to see her show some guts, it really comes across in the artwork! Have her tell Rick she slept with Shane, already. I mean, come on. She thought he was dead, Shane saved their lives, the world had come to an end, he was hunky in a big teddy bear partner who turns into an insane maniac kind of way. Give Rick a chance to act like a selfish butt for a change, and then have him get over it. What's he going to do, divorce her?

And give those kids some meatloaf. Have it be illustrated carefully, please. I want to see meatloaf disappearing into their mouths. Stop starving those little kids!!!

That's all for now,
Alison Smith

Hershel is a total craphead, you'll hear no defense from my camp. But you GOTTA feel bad for the guy, he's lost like fifty kids in seven issues.

Dear Robert:

First, let me just say that I really love the comic, I haven't seen a zombie story that has so much character since DAY OF THE DEAD. It's refreshing to read a zombie story that concerns mostly with the people that are in this situation, and not to focus solely on the just the situation. Anyway, my question is will we eventually see young Carl and Sophia grown up and fighting zombies in the future issues?

Sincerely,
Jeff Martinez

IF Carl and Sophia LIVE that long, I'd love to see them all grown up in this book. The thing is, I don't really like it when books all of a sudden jump ten years into the future... and I'm not yet convinced I'll be doing this book in ten years. I'd certainly love to... but we'll see. I'll have to remember not to kill Carl or Sophia just in case we do end up doing the book that long.

Letter hacks,

I haven't written back in a while, but I did talk to Nicole (girlfriend) about recording our reading of the walking dead; she is dead set against it (pun intended). Her favorite comic used to be y: the last man, then after reading the first walking dead trade paperback, y: the last man is now her 2nd favorite comic. Adlard's art is improving tremendously with each issue; I really appreciate his storytelling skills. Many

"hot" artists today lack this skill. I'm no artist myself, but when I read a story from an artist who lacks storytelling skills it's a real downer; the story is unclear. Oh, props to marvel team-up. I've read the first 2 issues, and I like how you balance the drama, comedy and action. People need this shit, man. Keep writing and we'll keep buying. Thanks for the letters page. I see marvel is coming back with them due to popular demand. I may be wrong, but Bendis and your efforts in keeping a letters page probably helped them see why a letters page is part of the comic book reading experience. Come on, Stan Lee knew what he was doing with the letters page.

Sleeping with one eye open,
Sophea & Nicole

Eat that Brian K. Vaughan! That's TWO readers that bumped Y from number 1 to number 2 for this book. You bald, bald man... oh how you must be feeling the sting of THE WALKING DEAD magic. Take that! Huh? Sales figures? What? You guys still need to record one of your readings for me. Life won't be complete until I hear that.

Hello again, Mr. Kirkman,

OK, I'm an idiot. I DID have more questions. I am wondering if we'll ever find out what happened to Morgan Jones, and his son Duane? (GREAT nod to the original "Night of the Living Dead" by the way...I'm sure if Mr. Jones were still alive, he'd get a kick about having a character named after him).

Sorry for sending you two emails so quickly. Just a tad slow with Christmas holidays to prepare for!

Take care!
David Johnston

I'm sure we'll eventually check back in on Cynthiana, Kentucky and the Jones family. When we get around to doing that is anybody's guess.

Hey Robert

I'm Chuck Gibson---I've been a pro inker for 10 years and a comics fan for the last 25 years. I kept reading the news sites---Robert Kirkman, Robert Kirkman, Robert Kirkman-----okay---I'm sick of hearing about this Kirkman guy. He can't possibly be that fucking good after all...

I'd never seen the books. The nearest comics shop is 200 miles away from me. Luckily, someone had scanned several issues, which I downloaded illegally--sorry, no choice---after reading some, I'd have gladly bought back issues. I've read 4 issues so far and there's SO MUCH more here than I was expecting, I had to drop you a line about it. I can see that you probably grew up with the same writers at Marvel and DC that I did and I wanted to let you know that I can completely see the quality in what you do.

Even when I'm around a comic store, I'm very selective about what I buy. Most of what's out there is complete crap---at least the last time I looked. I'm very discriminating about what I take the time to read. The best compliment I can give you is that when I read an issue of this, I get that same 'not enough and can't wait to read the next one' feeling I used to get as a kid. No one's done that to me in a VERY long time with a story. My hat's off to you, my friend. You rock!

Best
Chuck Gibson

Thanks for being honest with me about the illegal downloading there, Chuck... but I'm still totally calling the cops on you... you fucking thief.

Hi Robert!

I want to say this in all honesty, I've never, ever been compelled to write to a comic before, EVER! Seriously.

That said, I love this book! I tell everyone I know about it constantly and they all agree, you are putting out the best zombie related anything these days. This is the first book I've ever read that I had no complaints about, whatsoever!

However, your book is severely getting me down. On a monthly basis (more or less, but hey, everyone's late sometimes. Just don't start hanging out with Kevin Smith because I'm not waiting a year for anyone's book.) your book kills me. I've been writing a never-ending zombie book and until your book came out, I thought I had something, but compared to this book my stuff doesn't even compare. You've made me rethink my entire approach and I frequently either decide to give up or go back and start over.

So, the upside is: you're sparing the world another crap zombie book. The downside is, after reading another issue I'm frequently questioning

my ability as a writer, because if my story can't be as good as this, I'd rather see it on fire than have it inflicted on some poor reader.

Well, that's off my chest. Anyway, questions:

- 1) The Zombies. Do they decompose? Are they eventually going to just rot away? Are they decomposing at all?
- 2) Are you ever going to address the origin of the zombie epidemic?
- 3) Are the characters ever going to take an offensive attitude toward the zombies? (I would think this would be inevitable. But what do I know?)
- 4) You briefly addressed how zombies tell the difference between humans and zombies and suggested that they do this by smell. Are you ever going to go into anything else about the zombies? I find this intensely fascinating for some reason.
- 5) How long is this series going to continue? (This is my favorite book these days.)
- 6) The zombies eat animals too. Are there ever going to be zombie animals? (Please, god no.)
- 7) Is everyone going to be dead at the end?

The following are pleas/suggestions:

- 1) Please don't make the zombies get smarter. I find this idea completely revolting and feel it's going to be the one reason I really hate Romero's new zombie flick.
- 2) Please, when you introduce the 'bad survivors' can they not be bikers? That has been done to death. (I would think militia types would've fared well in this situation, no?) I've always felt that the 'bad' survivors were the real villains in the zombie flicks. The zombies are just doing what comes naturally and you can't really blame them. The human antagonists really have to be screwed up and evil to take a look around at hordes of walking dead people and still choose to be total shits. I trust that whatever you come up with will be great, but please, no bikers. Unless you want to put some bikers getting killed by someone worse, that would be great. I really hate the idea of bikers as big survivors of the apocalypse, it just doesn't make any sense to me. My family is full of bikers and trust me, they're the most uncoordinated, stupid, short-sighted, alcoholic F*** ups on the planet. Trust me, they wouldn't make it.

3) Please, no mysterious meteors or comets or anything from space as the answer to the plague. This idea is beyond lame.

4) The survivors aren't really thinking in terms of defense. There's got to be a National Guard armory somewhere, get what I'm saying? Either that, or a gun store? Every prison is located near a town and more or less, that town has a gun store in it. Failing that, there's always Wal-Mart!

5) Last, but certainly not least: KEEP KILLING OFF PEOPLE!!! When Rick's son got shot, I mean, wow! (Even though he lived.) That was the ballsiest thing I'd seen since the end of the "How I Learned to Love the Lord" issue of "Preacher". I haven't been so eager to get my hands on the next issue of book in my life! That was good. Just finished issue №14 and wow! I had it in my head that Tyrese's daughter and her slimy boyfriend were going to kill him. Suicide never even entered my mind.

One more question though: If Tyrese's daughter wasn't bitten, how the hell did she come back as a zombie? Is it an airborne thing or what?

That's about it. I love the book, I will keep buying multiple copies, the graphic novels etc, and I will continue to keep telling everyone I know that this is best zombie story ever written.

(I'm gonna get laughed here, but Romero's got nothing on you guys!)

Keep up the outstanding work!
Matt

If you've got a mediocre zombie story to tell, by all means, tell it. It sucking isn't stopping anyone else.
Questions:

- 1) *They decompose at a much slower rate than a normal dead body would.*
- 2) *No.*
- 3) *Do you really want to find something like that out in a letters column?*
- 4) *Stuff like this will come up from time to time as our characters learn more and more about the zombies. Oh, and the smell thing IS just a theory the characters have, it hasn't been proven.*
- 5) *As long as possible. At least a year after the point where it SHOULD end, there's no exact date for that.*
- 6) *No zombie animals.*

7) Hell if I know.

Suggestions:

1) No smart zombies. You hate the new Romero flick and it's not even OUT yet? That's strange.

2) Dude... bikers are like roaches... they can survive anything.

3) See, THAT'S why I'll never reveal what happened. Most of the possible reasons are lame and or unbelievable.

4) They already went to a gun store--now they've got that kickass three fence system in the prison. They're all about defense.

5) Oh, yeah... people are always going to be dying.

Yeah, it's an airborne thing... it has to be, right? Keep spreading the word, Matt.

Dear Letter Hacks ,

I just picked up issue №14 and I must say The Walking Dead keeps getting better with every issue. I have never wrote to a comic before but had to give a thumbs up to your great comic. I'm also a forum member at allthingszombie.com and trust me you have a lot of support from us. Keep up the great work guys.

Thanks,
Steve Guistolise

How many of you have REALLY never written to a comic before? I'm starting to get a little suspicious.

Dear Walking Dead,

I am done reading your letter collumn. This is because it just turned into a bunch of fans telling you how to write your comic.

I do like reading your comic book.

Only...you should have invincible bust in and just kill all the zombies. That would make the book good. Because I am the one writing the comic, not just buying it off the shelves and trying to write it for you. And he is Invincible, and what ever.

Clarence

Dude, you told me you were going to stop reading

the letters column because people are offering up too many suggestions on things to do in the book and then you went and suggested something I should do in the book. I don't get it, man... you're doing something that you hate seeing other people do. I'm baffled.

Letter Hacks!

Ah, it's been a while since I've sent in a letter of my babbling to you fabulous people. I blame that on not being able to get to my comic store as often as I should. Much to my surprise, I was able to pick up issues 10-13 after missing out on new comic days for the past two months. That was hell, pure hell... it was good that I had that much reading to do all at once. The wait was well worth it.

Honestly, I have nothing but praise for those issues. Little Carl is quite possibly my favorite character (next to Rick of course). He's still so innocent in all this crap that's happened. But he's still so protective when it comes to his daddy. I love it. The panel of him tugging on his gun was brilliant. I actually cheered for the little guy. I'm so glad you're hangin onto his character longer than you led us to believe, Robert.

Issue 14 was fantastic! Charlie's work has never been better. We all know how much I loved Tony's work on this book but Charlie just impresses me more and more every time a new one comes out. I'm a huge fan of the heavy shadows and the gritty feel of his lines. It suits the story perfectly.

And a cliffhanger ending as well?! I'm being spoiled.

I was wondering what Julie and Chris were up to. I wasn't expecting THAT though! Nice. So now it's not just spread through bites, I take it? Again, real nice.

I need to quit putting off my fan mail so much. It makes my letters too long. Okay, what next? OH! Seeing Simon Pegg was an added treat. I adore him. Had I known you printed pictures (on special occasion, i'm sure) I might have sent ya one of my Halloween costume. Though, I'm not so sure that I want my mucked up mug printed in your book. There's enough zombie goodness on the inside of it. We don't need zombie-me in the fanmail. Heh.

Robert, don't let those who choose to bitch about the book's lateness get to you. I know you, Charlie and Cliff (and even Tony with his wonderful covers) work hard to give us a book

that delivers the best possible. TWD is worth the wait and you will always have fans who are patiently drooling for the next issue.

Me included. My shirt is a mess.

Jenn Lee

Glad to hear you're still digging the book, Jenn. I understand people's complaints about the MINOR lateness we've experienced, but shit happens, y'know. We're always going to be falling behind and catching up. That's just the nature of a book where the creative team never has fill-in issues. It certainly shouldn't make you think we are any less dedicated to this book.

I can't believe you did it to me again! I never would have thought that the two lovebirds were going to kill each other in the latest comic!!!!!! A few questions, when are the military going to show up? Gotta be somebody out there!!!!!! Zombie baby in a few months? Hope not---that would suck!!!!!! Any chance of seeing Rick's hometown soon? By the way, love the other company comics you've been writing--team-up rocks!!!! Was there any other cops in Rick's town? Can't be just two--unless you're in Mayberry!!! Keep up the great work!

Sincerely,
Bobby W. Chamberlain

Damn, Bobby. Save some exclamation points for the rest of us! (see man, there was only one left). The military is out there somewhere in some fashion but we haven't seen them yet. Zombie baby? Hmmm... that's a good idea... There were plenty of other cops in Rick's town, but the place was evacuated by the time we saw it.

Hey Kirkman and crew -

I just LOVE WD. Keep up the good work, fellas! With that aside, I just have one question / suggestion. Where exactly is Rick and his group (their location, in the story) now? The last time I was paying attention, they were somewhere in the South...

I don't know if you guys are big manga readers, but at the end of every "Battle Royale", they keep track of the main characters' location and movements (as related to a map) so the readers don't lose track. You guys should do something like that everyso often. You could even jerry-

rig a map from a perspective of one of the main characters, and sketch where they've been, etc.. Draw little skull and crossbones on Atlanta, the condo complex, and other "dead" areas they've been, and draw "HOME" on the area where the prison is, draw arrows to show the path they take, etc...

What do you think? How's that for an idea?...

Thanks for reading,

Paul Johnson, Ohio

OH! - I almost forgot - BTW, will we ever see Morgan and Duane again? And will we see any more new characters soon? Just curious. Thanks...

Man, you guys are just dying to see Morgan and Duane again... I should probably get on that. The prison is somewhere south of Atlanta, but still in Georgia. They haven't traveled very far at all. They don't know exactly where they are, so I don't see any reason for us to know that either. So, for now at least, no map.

Hey guys.

Just read a bunch of WALKING DEAD in a row and had a few random thoughts I wanted to throw your way:

1. THE ZOMBIE SURVIVAL GUIDE has a cool answer to the whole "Why don't animals/microbes eat zombies?" It's 'cos their flesh becomes poisonous once tainted with whatever causes the zombification. Animal eats zombie, animal dies. Simple really. The book also suggests that zombies rot slower due to the virus (or whatever's running through their veins), too. Zombies can last for decades in dry, cold climates but will decay faster in tropical, humid climates. Nifty ideas, eh?
2. Did you read the Marshall Law zombie graphic novel "Blood, Sweat & Fears"? A great piss-take on the zombie genre, I think.
3. Simon Pegg likes your mag?!!!! That is so friggin' cool! Hey, if you loved SHAUN OF THE DEAD (and, frankly, who didn't?), then you should check out the DVDs of his two best-known TV series, BIG TRAIN and SPACED. They're bizarre, particularly SPACED, which has a lot of the same comedic elements as SHAUN and features several of the movie's cast as well.

4. Oh yeah, as for the comic itself, I found Hershel’s reactions to Rick & co. in №12 a tad unrealistic. He’s willing to shoot Rick at a moment’s notice, but he accepts Glenn staying, even after the kid’s shagged his daughter? Uh... doesn’t ring all that true to me. Anyway, the group’s packed up the van and moved on, so who cares?

5. Love where you’re going with the prison idea. Can’t wait to see where it ends up.

6. I finally got my issue of №13 after a several week delay. Seems the first batch that was sent to my Sydney comic shop had some major misprinting problems (pages doubled up, other pages missing). At least my copy in the second batch was fine.

Sorry to have rambled there. Keep up the good work and all that.

Dann Lennard
Sydney, Australia

PS Will Eisner’s dead? Damn, I’m depressed.

I love Marshall Law, it’s an amazing book. British superheroes at their best. Hershel was a frantic, irrational man. Taking that into consideration should make his actions more believable. Yeah... Will Eisner, that was a kick in the head. I actually attended his last Eisner Award ceremony. The industry has lost another legend.

Oi Kirkman,

Just wondering-did anyone predict that the kids were involved in a suicide pact? Or did you just not print the letter of anyone who got it, to preserve the twist? I spotted it a while ago, but the added twist of the boyfriend surviving was a masterstroke that I didn't see coming at all, so good work on that. Assuming Tyreese survives being nibbled on by his daughter, the situation will lead to some fun character interactions. Superb cliffhanger too, by the way. Tyreese is just cool and popular enough to not survive, I suppose.

And is it just me, or is the shadiest prisoner not the drug addict, or the murderer, but the creepy accountant? I don't know whether it's just because he's an accountant, or that he looks a bit like the pig-faced Nazi from Raiders Of The Lost Ark, or whether it's just the ominous way your art bod Charlie Adlard drew him when he told the gang what he was in for, but I don't trust

him. He's probably working for the aliens. Or an alien in disguise.

kelvin green

There were a few people (or at least one) on my message board at www.imagecomics.com who guessed it. But luckily, only about 25 people read those posts so I surprised a few of you. Nobody wrote in about it, thankfully. Heh, look at the eagle eye on you. The accountant WAS creepy, as seen on the last page of this very issue. I'll admit, that one was a little more obvious than it probably should have been but I thought for sure that it's obviousness would make it less obvious, therefore making it a surprise... oh well. I've still got a few more twists up my sleeve.

Zombiologists,

I only just got №14. Two weeks late. Hopefully, this'll get to you in time to make it into issue... 16? 17?

First off, I gotta pay Charlie and Cliff some major props. Other than Tim Sale, I don't know anyone except you guys that can render an ensemble cast of actual individuals. The visual pacing is simply inspiring. I'm continually impressed how you two can make llllooonnnngggg conversations visually engaging. I'm finding it challenging making fight scenes interesting, and it's funny how much I'm learning about visual (how many more times can I use that that word?) storytelling from you two's approach to rendering relatively quiet moments. Keep teachin'. I'm payin' attention.

Rob, this was one of the best written issues yet. Cases in point: Andrew's creative explanation for his responsibility for the zombies (both funny and sad); Dexter's hilarious panic when Rick almost opened the "outhouse" door; opening the gym door; the whole bit about Rick going to invite Hershel to move, and Hershel's calm acceptance of the invite (I am continually astonished by how well you are crafting real, unpredictable people); Lori going off on Rick and then doin' the hormone schizo thing; and the last page... surprising and powerful.

As much as I'm learning from the art, I'm learning just as much from your writing. I'm definitely not ready for an ensemble book, but the precision by which you're sculpting this cast is wonderous and very instructive.

You're shaping an honest epic.

I think I've avoided work long enough. Thanks Rob, Charlie, and Cliff.

Talkacha all next month.

Later,
Chip

Yeah, man... we're all totally awesome. I totally agree. Thanks for pointing all that out. I gotta say though, you've really forgot to mention what a great job Cliff is doing. The dept and lighting effects and what not that he adds to Charlie's pages is a feat to behold. So next time you write a gushing letter about this book... mention Cliff a little more... and me, mention me a little more. Charlie's covered though. Oh, you could have said something about Tony's cover, too.

Dear Robert and Charlie (and sometimes Tony?),

Just want to say what a great series The Walking Dead has become. I had read about it in Wizard, and decided to check it out through the first trade paperback. I'm a big fan of Dawn of the Dead (both versions) and 28 Days Later, so it was cool to see a comic book series take on the mantle of zombie fun. I was a little concerned at first with the intro of TWD being a little similar to the film 28 Days Later, but then, I know how it is with coincidences. (a story for another time.) Anyway, I immediately rushed back to the comic book store and picked up the second trade paperback. I have to say, reading 1-12 all at once was pretty satisfying, and I don't see how I could wait on a monthly basis that whole time. Well, now I am at №14, and I guess now I am a "waiter" like the rest of them. I've seen some complaints that the book is late, but I just jumped on at №13, so I guess I had it lucky. So now to the questions.

1.) Any chance this book can be released in color? I saw some pages of a kid in the Image Comics forum that did some coloring, and I loved it. Also, it would help differentiate some of the characters at times. I get the girls confused ALL THE TIME, and have to go back and reread it to figure out who, what, when, where, and why. Don't get me wrong though, I love the black and white. I just thought it would be cool to read the series again in color. So to number

2.) Can you do a first page intro to each

character? It would help a little, I think, with identifying the characters. Plus, it would make it a little more exciting to open up and see who's still surviving out there in TWD land. And lastly, the big question for me.

3.) I'm a writer here in L.A., and I want to do a zombie story set in your universe. So, how would one go about making a short mini-series or full length spin-off of the The Walking Dead, showing fans of the regular series there are other survivors going through the same ordeal in another place? It would compliment the book. Not saying I can write better or anything. I just have a story in mind, and think it would be a good companion to the regular series. Anyway, keep up the good work, and fun thrills when the zombies appear out of nowhere.

Keep on trucking.

Sincerely,
Mike Fish

Welcome to the world of the waiters. Don't feel too bad... you get the cool full color covers as a bonus for waiting.

1.) No. NEVER. This is not a color book. This book was never meant to be color, and it never will be.

2.) There are plans to do something along those lines. Hopefully we'll have that put together for the next issue or so.

3.) I'm not interested in doing spin-offs. I'm especially not interested in other people doing spin-offs. I don't want to make this book less special by dividing the audience over 2 or 3 different THE WALKING DEAD books. I'm not picking on you, and normally I wouldn't do this publicly but the new thing this month was "I've got an idea for a WALKING DEAD spin-off." You're about the fifth person this month to ask. Please, people, stop asking. One person was even offended when I told him not to continue with his plans of doing a spin-off. I love you all, and I appreciate that you enjoy this book and that it inspires you do come up with zombie stories. There's nothing keeping you from doing your own zombie comic. You just can't call it THE WALKING DEAD.

And with that, I bring another letters column to a close. That's for reading, I hope to see you all back here next month! Don't let me down.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

"You kill, you die." That's how we welcome folks in these pages. Sean here. This prison stuff is great and brutal and makes you feel bad in all the right ways, right. Anyways, before we get to the old Hacks, I want to introduce you to Amanda LaFranco, who will be taking over editing duties on this title. You'll be seeing her name splashed all across the Skybound line, and we couldn't be happier to have her at the company. So, please, give her a nice, warm "You kill, you die!"

Thanks, Sean! It may not be the warmest welcome, but the name of the game out here is trust... so I guess like Tyreese and Hershel before me I'll just have to go with my gut and stick along for the ride. Though things haven't been going too great for either of them lately... um, don't make me regret this. Let's get into these letters!

Issue #17 at last. I've been looking forward to this one ever since Tony turned in that fantastic cover all those months ago. I hope you guys enjoyed this issue. It's a real turning point for the book, which I think will become more apparent as the series goes on. Congrats to Charlie and Cliff for another outstanding issue. When I got the inks from Charlie I nearly flipped my lid. The scene of Rick wailing on Thomas is some of my favorite art Charlie has done so far, and, Cliff, bang up job as usual. Be sure to throw that fella a bone and pick up Fantastic Four: Foes. I'm sure the writer of that book would appreciate it as well.

Before we get into the letters I should probably give you a little bit of a tease as say that we're gearing up for our big 25th issue coming in October and we might just have some big stuff planned for that little anniversary. No giant-sized issue or anything like that, but we'll have some good stuff, keep an eye out for news.

Now, I think I've rambled on just long enough--let's answer some mail, shall we?

Tonight I entertained myself with The Walking Dead #14 and the movie Shawn of the Dead. It can't get any better than this. I am zombified for the whole weekend now. I love the depiction of a zombie dragging around his torso using his hands and arms. I found that here in The Walking Dead. The drama in this story is getting more and more intense as each issue comes out. I am starting to

have nightmares about zombies since The Walking Dead hit the shelves. Can you make the stories less scary, so I won't have nightmares anymore?

Sincerely yours,
Paul Dale Roberts

I'll get right on that. Next issue I'm going to introduce Benjamin, the talking rabbit. Oh, and when Rick and Lori finally get around to having that kid, it's going to be really sassy. I'm working on a catch phrase for the baby right now. In fact, I just might get around to putting those aliens in the book a little bit EARLIER than issue #75.

Kirkman and Company:

In a world where zombies have become mainstream pop-culture, The Walking Dead stands out as a title that truly understands the genre. As an aspiring screenwriter and student film-maker, I really appreciate the characters that populate your world; their nuances, flaws, and the ways they interact with each other make an exceptional, top notch story. And from the great Tony Moore to the just-as-brilliant-if-not-more-so Charlie Adlard, the book's visual style brings the story to life at a caliber rarely seen in "comic books."

What I would really like to see is more Dead paraphernalia. I've grown to love the book so much; I want a nice big poster for my wall. I guess I could just go to Kinko's and get one of the great covers or a page spread blown up, but I'd much rather throw the money at you instead. I think a poster could create a lot of new interest in the series. And at worst, it seems to be an easy way to make extra money. I for one would look at such a purchase as making an investment towards the production of more issues.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. Now get back to work and give me more Walking Dead!

Japheth Fitzpatrick

Hmm. A poster, you say? I'll have to look into it. It's certainly not a bad idea. If there's a bunch of you out there interested in things like this, the best way to make it happen is to let us know. Email the address at the top of the page and tell us. I'm certainly not opposed to doing posters so if you want one, tell me. It just might

happen. Getting back to work now, Japheth, no need to crack the whip.

Letter Hacks,

Well it was only a matter of time before we saw Shane again in some way, shape or form, but I sure as hell wasn't expecting it to be like this. It took a while, but eventually I caught on to what Rick had up his sleeve, next execution of it (in more than one way). Tyreese really went off the deep end this issue, not that I can blame him, but I think Hershel's gonna be a bit more ticked just seeing that ending. What the hell happened there?

1) So I take it Lori's little outburst was just some hormonal spazing?

2) When exactly is the baby due, issue wise?

As always Charlie and Cliff are doing a killer job bringing the book to life. The characters are really brought to life with the lines Charlie's been throwing down. Gives the book a great feel that matches the tone of the story awesomely! Keep it up!

Mike Storniolo

I think by now it's all pretty clear what was going on with Hershel, Rachel, and Susie there at the end.

1) Only time will tell. You're just going to have to wait and see.

2) Issue-wise... I'm not going to say, I wouldn't want to give it away. I will say that at this point Lori is about five months pregnant. So, it could be a while.

Zombiologists,

To be honest... Well, what an overwhelming issue. Did Tyreese commit suicide?

How poetic, AND disturbing.

The building tension between Rick and Lori is one of the things that lends an air of realism to the book. You've let it mount slowly, almost unnoticed. This makes me wonder how detailed your outlines are. How far in advance, and with how much depth do you plot your scripts? You seem to have at least several aspects worked out in great detail pretty far in advance. Having only written 3 sequential scripts, I'm curious what guides you in your choices of pacing.

Thomas Richards isn't a good guy, is he?

My only complaint is that the scene with Shane was

too wordy. I think a majority of your readership could have wondered the same things Rick expressed without his dialogue holding their hands. This is obviously a subjective thing, but I think some of the poignancy was undermined by all the words.

Of course the last page... Jeez. I have 3 little girls myself. I stopped watching ER because of all the kids-in-jeopardy episodes. Very disturbing. Very unsettling.

Damn, man.

Later,
Chip

I have lots of thing plotted years in advance. I have a set story for almost every individual character. I know exactly what was going to go down with Julie and Chris when they appeared in issue #7 for the first time. Then there are things like Donna's death in issue #8, which was done at the last minute while I was scripting issue #8. In fact, things do change frequently from my plot (you'll hear more about this in next issues letters column). Originally Julie was supposed to shoot Chris, and then live—Chris was going to be turned into a zombie and killed by Tyreese and Julie was going to be in the book for some time after that. That's why on the cover to issue #14 it's the hand of a white male and not a black female (though if it had been the hand of a black female that would have given the whole thing away...). I have these things mapped out, but nothing is set in stone. If I thought of a good way to kill Rick and make it interesting, and I didn't think it would hurt the book in the long run, I'd off the guy. Nobody is safe.

Wordy? Too wordy? Man this whole book should be called The Walking Words sometimes it's so wordy. OF COURSE that scene was too wordy! It had to match the rest of the book! This is after all, a talking book, not an action book. You guys seem to like it okay.

And yeah, when I have kids one day I'm sure I'm going to reread all these issues and really hate myself. It's been a bad time for kids in THE WALKING DEAD lately... especially if your father's name is Hershel.

Holy Shit!! I just got done reading issue 15 and was totally blown away by the last page. Don't get me wrong the entire book was awesome. One of the top 3 of the run in my most humble opinion, but I was notttttt expecting that!!! Just when I thought it couldn't get better, issue 15 blew me away and leads me to believe you have a whole lot more to say in the pages of the Walking Dead. I can't wait to see the fallout over this issue and just what goes on next. As always an excellent issue of my favorite book which by the way is saying a lot seeing that I get around 50 books a month. Invincible also is in my top 10!! Keep up the great work and I will continue to

try and get more people to pick up your titles!!

Bob

Thanks for the kind words, Bob. It's really great to know that people out there are digging all the twists and turns in the book. Especially knowing that I've got all kinds of stuff planned. Keep on reading folks, it only gets better from here, until y'know... the aliens come in issue #75.

Robert,

So I'm thinking that this comic is a contagious zombie plague in and of itself—Friends of mine that have never touched a comic have jumped on the DEAD bandwagon and eagerly devour each new issue just as readily as I do.

I gotta' say, though... As I peruse the lovefest that is that is the letters page, I see lots of comments about the cliffhanger endings... "Oh, Kirkman, my jaw dropped," or "Oh, Kirkman, I turned the page and had an orgasm," I always grin smugly to myself 'cause I don't think you've ever gotten me.

Then came №15. I hit the last page, my jaw dropped, and I let out a big, "What the FUCK?!" Nice. Ya' got me. Um... At least the headless girls won't come back as zombies? Yeah, I'm a "glass half-full kinda' guy."

Anyways... Keep up the fantastic work... I'll never doubt your cliffhanger skills again...

Ernie Cooper

Yeah, I'll cop to the fact that this letters column is a bit praise-heavy, but I swear I print ever single negative letter I get. In fact, had I control over the kind of letters I receive I'd prefer some more confrontational, question-filled, gripe-laden emails. It makes for a much more interesting letters column for my part. Although, opening with a nice kiss-ass line is never a bad idea.

Dear Robert Kirkman,

I have recently came to know 'The Walking Dead' by my enthusiastic boyfriend by this time there has been 12 released issues that I manage to read in a single day despite working the majority of it at our local movie theater. Other than stopping to serve customers I highly enjoyed it and I have obsessed ever since. Your take of the world if the dead walked is amazing it never ceases to lose its entertaining values. I love all the characters even some of the shading ones and I'm looking forward to your next release greatly.

My boyfriend and I noticed since the success of Walking Dead there has been a lot of zombie related comics being released even in the Marvel universe. I was curious if you think this has anything to do with your comic and if it does do you find it insulting people riding the wave you created or flattering?

I love how every comic issue has a cliffhanger ending that keeps wanting me to come back for more each month. The recent issue with the death of Rachel and Susie has me very curious that perhaps there are more threats than our walking rotting corpses. It's obvious someone inside our big happy 'alive' family is not whom they pretend to be. My boyfriend and I both believe the killer is Thomas Richard because we have only seen him twice in three issues and he is always shady. I believe the small cameo of Richard was to remind us that he exists however attention is not drawn to him because of the lack of appearance from our known murderer and the drug dealer. I was just curious if I'm remotely right?

Keep up the good work and I am so CURIOUS to find out what happens!

Zombie Slayer,
Megan D. Sasher

I have noticed that there has been an enormous amount of zombie comics added to the schedule this year, I am a fan of the genre after all. It's no secret that this book is a success, and if other people see that and want to give their zombie book a shot, I have no problem with that. In fact, if this book has opened the door for more Dead World I think that's a great thing. I've yet to read the book myself but that's just because I haven't been able to find the beginning. That's a series that seems to have captured the hearts of zombie fans the world over and I think it's a good thing to get more of that. I personally think that the hit zombie movies like Dawn of the Dead and Shaun of the Dead have gone a long way to put the walking corpses on peoples minds, much more so than this little book, so I don't claim to have started any craze. Like I say though, more zombie books is a GOOD thing. I'm eagerly awaiting Frank Cho's Zombie King (which I think has gotten the back cover this issue), the aforementioned Dead World relaunch, Zombie Tales from Atomika, and more Remains if Steve Niles and Kieron Dwyer ever decide to do some. I'm probably looking forward to a lot of zombie books that I've forgotten to mention but hey, it's late... I can't remember everything.

You think it's Thomas, huh? Do you now? Well, you're certainly in for a shocker then! Just wait until you see that it's really... uh... Thomas. Well, you got it, nice job. He was a bit obvious, I admit, but I figured after #15 issues people would be second-guessing me so much they WOULDN'T go after the obvious choice. I even put that scene in #15 to make it look like he WASN'T the killer... and that's what tipped people off the most. I even thought

about making the killer someone else, just to throw people off, but I decided against it in the end, because I had plans for that character. So hey—you win some, you lose some... it was still at least entertaining right?

Dear Kirkman & fellows,

Sorry to add to your endless pile of emails and letters but I guess you ask for it when writing such a good comic. I'm a 17 year-old guy who lives out in a place called Whitehouse Ohio, which is another way of saying the middle of nowhere. I didn't even know your comic existed until I walked into my brother's room and saw this red thing that said The Walking Dead vol. 1 Days Gone Bye. Since being exposed at a young age, by my brother, to zombies I took a gander. On the inside I read a small commentary by you saying how this comic will be different and you will know the whole story of what happens to Rick etc. I was excited to know this before I started reading the actual comic because I had been in a rut of seeing no complete end to a zombie movie, this rut being every other zombie movie I had ever seen.

So I started reading and needless to say I was hooked from the beginning. Getting to the end of vol. 1, I found vol. 2 and then discovered that this was a new comic and that there was no vol. 3. Yes that's right, I didn't even know your comic was new, but I wasn't big on comics so I guess that's my excuse. So after reading volumes 1 and 2 I am back begging my local retailer if the new edition of TWD has arrived, reminding myself of when I would call Toys R Us asking if they had Pokemon cards every day. HA! HA! Well patience comes with age I guess and with a comic this addicting I am gonna need all I can get.

Anyway enough about me I would like to talk about issue 15. I practiced my patience for about ten minutes on the way home with my brother before I started reading this edition. As I got into it I was surprised at all the suspense. I knew Tyreese was gonna do something because he acted so calm after Julie died but I didn't know what, why Rick left, if Rick would make it to wherever, and naturally who killed those three girls? Oh wait there were only two heads hmmm... Wow I can already see my local comic book store's guys ears bleeding after hearing me constantly asking for Issue 15. Well thanks for all the suspense and a superb comic.

Paul Wiederhold

Pokemon cards? You kids these days...

I probably should have SHOWN that Maggie took the kids to the barber shop and left them there—that was a mistake on my part. The kids were young, but not too young to be unsupervised... or so they thought.

Anyway, Maggie was probably off boinking Glenn or something. She was nowhere near the room when Thomas went inside.

Holy Shit... these guys just can't catch a brake can they?

You'd think once they had found a place where they could hold up and be safe, things might mellow out just a little...I think more people died in this one issue than in any of the others that have come out so far. Chris, Rachel, Susie and quite possible Tyreese... all dead.... Jesus!

Even when it looks like things are going to be good for a while..... Bang! It all seems to hit the fan. And on top of that we make the discovery that you do not have to be bitten to turn into a zombie.

Man Robert, I can't wait to see what you have up your sleeve for next month. You've really got me hooked!

Eric L. Busby

Actually, Jesus died a LONG time ago... or so I hear. He was the first official zombie wasn't he?

Hey Kirkman,

Love the book, think that you, Charlie, Cliff and Tony are all great, standard opening letter praise and such...

Anyway, after rereading issues 1-14 followed by the fresh №15 this week I felt compelled to thank you and the crew for putting out such a quality product. So, thanks. I've been reading since the beginning but it wasn't until my second venture through that I realized what your book does for me that no book past or present has. See, I work at a comic shop so I get the chance to read pretty much everything that comes out. There is a ton of good stuff but it's all pretty standard fare. You have made me actually give a shit for the characters in your book. Now I love Flash, the X-men, yadda yadda yadda. However, the constant fear of losing these people of your creation that I've come to know over the months seriously has a real effect on me. For example, two months in a row now, you've totally left me thinking you've sealed the fate of Tyreese, my favorite character, and that gets to me.

When I read The Flash (my fave superhero book) I enjoy it but I pretty much know what's gonna happen. Bad guy comes, Flash stops him, bad guy gets smarter and fucks stuff up, Flash finds power within himself he didn't have before and stops bad

guy. Rinse. Wash. Repeat. With Walking Dead ya never know. Rick could even be the next to bite it. And I dig that. So keep up the awesome work. But lay off of Hershel man, 5 of 7 kids is a bit many. Dude's gonna snap.

Sincerely,
Mike Capuano

PS- Most of the characters have all had some tragedy befall them. I think it's time Rick felt some of their pain. Just sayin'.

Rick's feeling plenty of pain, I think. As time goes on Rick will get more and more tormented, don't you worry. If you knew the things I had planned you'd think I hated each and every one of the guys. Glad you're digging the book, Mike. We'll try not to let you down.

I'd like to take this opportunity to once again say FUCK YOU to Bob Kirkman!

Come on man! It isn't enough that you kill off poor Julie and weirdo Chris, but you have to end the issue with beheaded little children! If you remember my last letter I asked you to give us at least one happy issue, this isn't it!

It's interesting that the living all seem to be carriers of the zombie virus now, but it makes some sense. They've certainly been covered by zombie bits enough time to be exposed. Now that I think of it we haven't seen a zombie bite in quite a few issues and didn't the last bite our hero's had to deal with take a lot longer to kill the victim than previous bites? It could be possible that Our hero's are developing a partial immunity to zombie plague, obviously they carry the virus but it doesn't make them sick like bite victims and can't take control of them until they die. It's quite possible that Rick and the gang might even be immune to zombie bites through limited exposure to the virus, though death would make the virus active again.

I work In a prison so before I go I'd like to give my professional opinion of the inmates.

Dexter- Hard to read, I'm a little suspicious of what he's got hidden in the freezer but I'm inclined to believe him. He didn't have to say he was in for murder and he's certainly big enough to defend himself so he wouldn't need to lie about his crimes to impress the other inmates.

Axel- I would like to get a look at his tattoos but I would imagine he's not a threat to the group. I deal with guys like him every day and as long as they stay sober their ok. The only problem he may pose is he may be a white supremacist. Again I'd need to see the tattoos.

Andrew is exactly what he says he is, a crazy junkie.

Thomas- Sex offender. Sure he said he was a tax cheat but sex offenders in the system never admit what their real crime is especially if it involves children. He also seems to be making nice with the women, helping them move their things, asking personal questions. Child molesters are manipulators to the core and they start by being friendly. Of course if he is a sex offender he is certainly a suspect for the girls murder but most sex offenders don't kill their victims on purpose and certainly don't mutilate the bodies. I don't peg Thomas for a serial killer because the other inmates would likely already know about that and avoid him. Inmates are great privet detectives when it comes to knowing about each other.

Anyway thanks again for getting me all sucked in. But please start taking it easy on the living. The ship of humanity is sinking fast enough as it is and a few issues where good things happen to them wouldn't kill you.

Oh and Fuck you for killing those little girls

Ken Lindgren
Rochester MN

You again? Damn, Ken--get a LIFE!! I mean--how many letters have you written in to this comic? And fuck you--I'll kill whomever I want to kill. It's my gig, I can off anyone I want! Good analysis on the inmates though. Axel's more of a lovable biker than a white supremacist... he should get along fine with Tyreese.

Dear Kirkman,

Wow. The only thing better than seeing Shane die the first time was seeing him do it again. It never occurred to me that these people did not realize that the recently dead would rise, even if they were not bitten. Which brings me to my question. Do you think the bite from a zombie infects a person, and that's why they turn? Or, does their nasty bite just kill them, and as a result of being dead, they rise again?

And sorry about Jubilee. My wife loved that book. Your's was the best take on the character since she first came around, when she used to act like that. MTU still rocks!

Toe Tags... I love that Romero is writing, and hopefully getting silly zombie stories out of his system. I really thought he was going to make you look like crap! I don't think his series sucks, it's just old school silly comic stuff. Romero is old school and has viewed comics as being silly fun for kids. He often referred to Dawn as "comic booky". Land of the Dead is going to be great.

Man these last few issues were great. I thought they would just settle down for a while and have expository dialog and reflectionary reactionary I'm making this up kind of crap. But we lost five members of the gang in issue 15! Sure, two were already dead, but man! I thought we were just going to be left with zombie prison abuse scandals to look forward to. There's an idea... So here's some more questions:

1. Will we be seeing Morgan and Duane Jones again?
2. How far along is Lori? When is she due?
3. How much ass does Simon Pegg kick?
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how stupid is Atilla the Hungry?!?

Till next month,
Chris Pitts

The specific particulars of how a zombie bite works will all be laid out in upcoming issues as the characters figure it out. You REALLY don't want me to ruin anything in the letters column, do you?

No need to be sorry about Jubilee, I had fun, we had a good run and I've got PLENTY of work on top of it. No big deal. And yes, MTU DOES still rock.

1. Possibly... though exactly when is still up in the air.
2. Five months or so. Four months or so.
3. Much ass. Mister Pegg kicks MUCH ass.. for the Lord.
4. 15, not his finest moment.

Dear Funkmeister Robert and Funkomaniacal Crew:

My reaction at the end of №14: "Yes!"

At the end of №15: "... oh, no...."

You finally answered a question that had been puzzling me ever since Shane's death: Do all the dead rise or not? A lot of people misunderstand Romero's rules. All corpses (with intact brains) rise. Zombie bites don't cause that; they just happen to be lethal. I'm not a stickler about following Romero's rules out of sheer loyalty to George the Great. Variation can be fun. What bugged me about the Dawn of the Dead remake and had been nagging me about The Walking Dead was, first, that it's mathematically impossible for zombie to overrun the whole world if the cause is strictly a bite-transmitted infection. Second, it's scarier to think that no matter how well you wall yourself off from the existing zombies, you're in trouble if a single person behind the wall with you dies during the night. It's also scarier when characters learn the rules aren't what they'd

thought. The rules can kill them, but they don't know what those rules are. What could be more stressful than that? As long as rule shifts don't seem arbitrary, some changing will raise the tension. Rick said, "That means we're all infected ... or could be." Some of the characters have to wonder: If infection from a bite kills you in less than three days, how long might it take bite-free infection to kill us?

When Julie rose, you made those characters' lives even scarier. Well done.

Turning the page to see those beheaded girls really disturbed me. That's one of the most horrific things I've ever seen in a comic -- certainly not the goriest, but one of the most unpleasant by far. Until that moment, this had been one big adventure. Now there's some horror in this story. Human evil has intruded. Again, you made their lives scarier. Again, well done (you evil-minded bastard).

Two years ago, I took my Forensic Psychology students on a prison tour. Among the many memorable things I saw were, simply, a barber's chair in one room and a dentist's chair in the next. What surprised me was that I'd never considered that a prison would have to have its own dentist office. Even though the dentist only came by once a month, the place was ready for him. Zombie fanatic that I am, I realized a prison might be a great place to hole up during the days after Night of the Living Dead. It would still be full of rapists, murderers, and drug dealers, though. When the guard guiding us around said that crash gates should shut any section off from the others in case of riot, I thought yes, this could work. Unless you release the inmates before they know there's no place to go, you'll quickly have whole wings full of zombies, but you could pick them off from the other side of the bars.

Why am I recounting this prison visit? Because as soon as Rick found that prison, I knew people would start ragging you about Reign of the Dead. After the prison visit but before I discovered your vastly superior The Walking Dead, I read the interesting (albeit terribly edited) Reign of the Dead books. Those characters also hole up in a prison. So freaking what? It's a logical setting. It amazes me that more zombie movies and books haven't already explored prison locations. How many other self-sufficient but non-military fortresses can civilians find out in the open? Realistically, you have to cover some of the same ground other writers have already hit because of how the world works. If you never address previously covered issues, people will just ask over and over when you're going to get around to them. ("Where's the army?" "Are they going to run into the army?" "When do they run into the army?")

Once the survivors get around to rebuilding their

world, you'll get to explore situations we've never seen before. Even Land of the Dead takes place after the process and struggle and rebuilding some semblance of society. What about the effort along the way? Let's see them raid a power plant, restore satellite communications, and just get the plumbing to work (which might be the scariest mission of all). And of course, there will be war.

Thank you for spinning this tale.

Dr. Travis Langley

P.S. Whether you meant it or not, now that you've agreed to name the prison after a reader, you realize you're going to get swamped with things like, "Hey, name the power company Langley Electric," or "The mad scientist who's foolishly trying to train zombies should be named Dr. Langley." Some people have no shame.

Jesus... did I agree to name the prison after a reader? Crap. What issue was THAT in? I need to stop working on these things so late...

I would be remiss not to mention how much I enjoy the new Noble Causes series from Jay Faerber, Fran Bueno, and Ron Riley. Great, GREAT stuff. I'm really digging it.

Oh and Wildguard, by Todd Nauck. Pick of the TPB, it's great new super-hero book.

Mr. Kirkman,

Wow...No15 was just great. Just a few points, because I like letters written this way.

1) The group is disintegrating fast, and I'm guessing one of the prisoners is a psycho, judging from Susie and Rachel's grisly deaths at the end? After all, the zombies thus far haven't been much for decapitations.

2) You printed my letter! First comic to do that. I'm in for life, now. Admittedly, I wasn't surprised, since it's probably only the truly incoherent that you don't print, but it was cool.

3) The All Flesh sourcebook I referenced wasn't mentioned as a knock on you at all. In fact, the collected All Flesh web community tended to think the timing was pretty cool. Hell, the author of that book is a fan of this book that has written in before. We likes our zombies, and we likes 'em done good. And you're doin' 'em good. Well, there's this one living dead chick, she thinks the book's gotten too sappy. But then, I think she roots for the zombies. (Kidding, LDG!)

4) I liked Tony Moore's art, I really did. But

Charlie and Cliff are frickin' great, too. I didn't even really find it that much of an adjustment. Now, if the book suddenly went color, that would be an adjustment.

5) Just a commentary on the book. Some books are witty, and I enjoy them for that. Some are flashy and, yeah, I enjoy them for that. This book is just GOOD. It is the only book I regularly go back and re-read from first issue to the latest.

6) George Romero's leaked Resident Evil script. Ever read that? Man it kicked the RE movie's butt.

7) Milla Jovovich is overrated man, jeez.

On that contentious note, I'll let this letter die, only to hopefully rise again in a couple of issues. I look forward to Rick's return to the prison.

Keep 'em rising
Tommy Brownell

1) Looks like you were on the right track, Tommy.

2) There are PLENTY of letters that don't get printing. In fact, the more incoherent your letter, the more likely it is to get printed.

3) Sure, sure.

4) No chance of that happening, for sure. No color ☐ EVER.

5) Thanks.

6) No... never read it. Someone please send me a link, or the script, to the address above... please.

7) The hell you say. She's the greatest living actress working today. Milla makes a movie good. I'm telling you--you're just not seeing what I'm seeing. The girl is solid gold!

And with that, ladies and gentlemen, I bring this letters column to a close. Thanks for reading, and if you're looking for some new comics to read, you could do a lot worse than picking up the books I've recommending in these pages. It's all good stuff, I swear. That Bendis fellow needs some new readers bad, too... that book is struggling, so help that guy out. He's got a kid to feed!!

Be back here next month for less letters column and pages upon pages of character fact sheets. Unless it gets down to the wire and I don't have time to put them together.

Sigh.

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hey, all! Amanda here, and my very first Letter Hacks. I'm coming into this in the thick of it, and man, it feels like our group can't catch a break. I really thought the prison was going to work out for them... what should have been a sanctuary has been nothing but trouble and heartache so far. The way things shake out with Dexter is one of my favorite mini storylines in the series. There's a lot of "What ifs" we can ask ourselves while reading THE WALKING DEAD, but I always thought the judgement passed on Dexter after the murders of Rachel and Susie and in the wake of you know... the zombie apocalypse, deserved a closer look. Maybe nothing would have changed... but what if...

I'll be back next issue with more philosophical "What Ifs" and my own heartache thinking about them, but in the meantime, enjoy these old school Hacks!

Issue #18--the one that got away from me. This was a weird one. The way I write these things is in steps. I kick stuff around in my head for months jotting down notes here and there, then I sit down and I write a plot on paper--then I use that plot as a guideline while I type this sucker up in script form. Well, my plot for this issue and the script are almost entirely different. I had a major development planned for this issue, but the characters informed me they weren't ready--then Maggie wouldn't let me hang Hershel, then Dexter and Andrew wouldn't leave without a fight. It's hard to explain--I had things planned out--but as I typed the dialogue things changed, the characters took over and things went in other directions. It was kind of scary.

I hope it turned out okay. At least it looks pretty.

This wraps up the "Safety Behind Bars" arc and ends it with a cliffhanger (tee hee). Starting next month--more of the same!

Oh, and our letters page will be cut short this month to make room for the much requested character pages that will follow this letters page. HOORAY. Speaking of letters:

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I am becoming more impressed with your ability to develop characters than I thought possible.

The bitterness between Rick and Lori adds even more tension to an already fragile situation and makes Lori a bit of an antagonist. I'm anxious to see how serious she was when she said, "I'm sick of him." I also found it poignant that Rick felt the need to reconcile with Shane. In every zombie/apocalypse story I've always wanted as much detail as possible, especially what was going through the minds of the individuals and that would motivate them.

Regarding motivation, what have you got against poor Herschel? His kids are getting whacked left and right. You're for guns right? And since Herschel is anti-gun you're making his life even more miserable. That's fine by me. I'd rather have a gun and not need it, than...you get the picture.

It's an interesting "who-dunnit" you've added as well. It's a matter of who knew where the barber-shop was and when they knew it. Inmates are first up obviously. And I'd mention the other character's by name, but they escape me. In time though, I'm sure the more you develop them (rather than whacking them left and right) I'll remember them as easily as Rick, Lori, and Herschel.

Now that this is my second letter, I'll return to comic-book letter format, with questions.

1) Communication. Hasn't anyone at that prison thought of checking out a radio/transmitter to try to find out what's going on in the rest of the world? Electricity is the only thing holding them back. Nearly all modern prisons have on-line access even.

2) Is Rick planning on returning to his hometown to invite the man and his son to comeback with him? I thought that was the first place he would head after going and getting Herschel and his family.

3) Everyone has been asking for one-shots to add to the back story. Have you considered introducing a new character by first starting with their back story (i.e. from the moment “all hell broke loose/to the present”)?

4) Television. I’m sure you’ve seen the previews for “Sin City” and “A Scanner Darkly,” or even seen “Sky Captain...” If you had final say on design for a television series based on TWD would you prefer those styles of “live-action” animation, or simply black & white & greys?

I’m really starting to enjoy the greys as much as the penciling. Too bad I can’t remember the guys name who does that (I’m not typing this at home). But give him credit anyway.

Sincerely,
Merl Key

1) The haven’t found a radio yet. Give them time. They really haven’t had a chance to explore the prison at all.

2) It’s a long way away—but it’s not out of the question.

3) I don’t really want to dilute the property with spin-offs. I’m not really into cashing in. Give me another month or so...

4) I’d prefer live action—it just seems more real.

Cliff appreciates the compliment, even though you forgot his name.

I’ve been reading The Walking Dead since issue 10. I bought the first trade and all other issues I could find to catch up.

I’ve been reading comics since 92’ when I was 9, so I’m not going to lie to you and tell you this is first letter I wrote to a comic, but if it’s printed or if I actually get a response than that will be a first for sure. (Though when I was 12 or possibly 13 I had it figured out, letters written to comic books go to the same place letters written to Santa go and haven’t written a letter since.) I love the book, I really do, but I’m also not going to sit here and enumerate the reasons why, I think it would sully it somehow.

I will say that it is the reason I have a pull list at my comic book shop. Before this title came out I had no trouble getting an issue of anything, and now this sucker comes out and I have to get

a pull list or else I’ll miss an issue. Also, because of this book I’ve added Invincible and Marvel Team-Up to my pull list. My shop never seems to get Brit in, but I’m dying to read it. I read an interview someone did with you (It was linked by Tycho and Gabe (I don’t know their real name... that’s right nested parenthesis... it’s a code monkey geek thing) of Penny-Arcade after they met you at a convention in Seattle.) and it sparked my interested in that book but I can’t find it anywhere, which is depressing.

Brit isn’t currently being published but the three books that have been out for a while are available for sale at www.khepri.com so they should be relatively easy to find.

You can now get collected editions of BRIT at the Skybound store: <https://store.skybound.com/collections/brit-comic>

I am quite shocked that no one has pointed out that you have the best letters column in all of comicdom. I’m pretty sure it’s the best letters column in my entire history of reading comic books. It’s amazing that you are able to publish and actually answer that many letters in a month. Reading all of those letters takes me forever, but I’m determined to do it every month. Between the letters and covers I’ll never settle for another TPB.

That’s the idea.

Don’t ever do color. Never. I somehow managed to convince my art teacher to let me do an independent study where I draw a comic book. Nothing fancy, nothing I’m ever going to try and sell, just something I’ll put up on my website just so I could say I did it. Anyway she asked me to bring in samples of B&W comic book art I liked so I brought her Sin City and The Walking Dead. (Samples of both Moore and Adlard) She asked me what I liked about the Walking Dead, and I told her “I like that it’s pretty... and has zombies... cause zombies rock.” I tried to convince her she should read it but once I started explaining the storyline to her she just looked at me like I was weird... more so than she normally does, which when you are dealing with a hippie art teacher is really quite the accomplishment. Consequently - in case you were wondering - when she asked me what I liked about Sin City and I told her, “I like that it’s not pretty.”

In response to a letter I read in Issue 15:
See Simon Pegg isn’t actually rich. When he

writes you telling you that he's making millions and billions, well that's a desperate cry for help cause he's actually poor. You have to realize that when you take American dollars and convert them to British pounds a million American dollars is the equivalent of roughly 45 pounds or something. That's hardly enough to buy a video game. Poor guy. I hear he is supposedly making a sequel to Shaun of the Dead though so yay for that. I totally need to get a cricket bat now because of that movie.

Don't let his appearance fool you. That limey brit is RICH!

In response to a letter I read in Issue 16: Bikers are good people, not all of them are alcoholics. From age 7 on up I would hang out with my uncle's biker gang and most of them wouldn't touch booze, so much so they had their monthly meetings at donut shops and drank coffee. He was in a biker gang comprised of Vietnam Vets, and trust me when I say these guys could survive an apocalypse. If they could survive a war I'm sure they could survive an apocalypse longer than most. I highly doubt they'd turn into dicks afterwards and start gutting people for no reason.

You've been duped. I'm telling you. That WASN'T coffer and those WEREN'T donuts. Show me a sober biker and I'll show you a leprechaun.

This might seem a little scatterbrained, but I'm trying to get a lot of ideas out here, I've been meaning to write you for a while but I think that's everything. You keep writing, I'll keep buying and reading.

Jesse Mrozowski

So I'm responding INSIDE the letters now. BIG DEAL. The way Bendis does it in Powers makes the letters and responses really easy to follow. There's nothing wrong with copying his style. It works for Brubaker.

Hey Robert!

I know we've already talked several times but here's a formal note for your Letter Hacks column. TWD is, after all, my current favourite comic and has been since the first issue so it's about time I wrote in. First off, I should say on record that you've got one of the most solid stories about the living dead that I've read since

Matheson's I Am Legend. High praise indeed but you've earned it because you've got an engaging story and then you have gore, in that order, something a great deal of filmmakers and writers are sorely misunderstanding these days. And yes, I know I Am Legend is about vampires but it is the genesis of all modern zombie movies since George Romero has openly stated he stole the idea for Night of the Living Dead from Matheson's novel. It's about the dead coming back to life inexplicably and infecting and consuming the living, now let's move on.

So if Romero stole from Matheson and I'm stealing from Romero... that makes it okay... doesn't it?

Storytelling is all about character. I Am Legend is about Robert Neville. The undead are, of course, a massive part of it, but they are secondary to the one human element. Now, don't get me wrong, my license plate says ZOMBIES and I have a Day of the Dead tattoo sleeve on my entire right arm and I love gore more than the average person but zombie tales are, ahem, brainless unless you care about the characters. In fact, there was an entire issue without any zombie action at all and I daresay anyone even noticed; that's the sign of a solid story. This would also be the difference between Romero's Dawn of the Dead and Snyder's MTV-style, undead epileptic fit of a remake. The latter boasts too many one-line-spouting fist-magnets that no one could give a fuck about whereas, in Romero's flick, the audience genuinely freaked when Roger got his leg chomped climbing into the truck with Peter, for example.

Your book succeeds where Snyder's movie didn't in my opinion, it manages to introduce new characters frequently, but you seem to always understand their purpose. Or maybe you don't and figure it out as you go along, but nevertheless, no characters are ever wasted. *(I think you're forgetting Rachel and Susie)* And when they are, they're wasted in style! *(oh, never mind)* I should say, whoever this slasher is that's decapitating little girls in your comic at the moment echoes another brand of horror beyond the zombie sub-genre and, quite frankly, I'm surprised and very pleased about it. In a world that's overrun by monsters, they're trapped inside with the human variety - the most unsettling kind. Very nice.

My point is, your book is never predictable and more fun than any zombie movie I've seen since Day of the Dead, and that's saying a lot, since the competition's been heavy and Day of the

Dead is the Mount Rushmore of zombie flicks.
In short, Right. The. Fuck. On.

Love and buckets of blood,
Jovanka (Jen) Vuckovic Managing Editor
RUE MORGUE MAGAZINE

Good to hear from you, Jen. I've gotta say I disagree. I think Shaun of the Dead is the most fun, entertaining, and compelling zombie ANYTHING since Day of the Dead. Although, I think you may be a bit more of an expert on the subject, so what do I know?

Hi bob

You sly goosel! After reading the end of Walking Dead 16 it surprised me that Thomas WAS the murderer, I thought it would have been too obvious for it to be him but there it was. I also suspected Dale since he decapitated a zombie with a axe in issue 3 and lost his wife before he was introduced but he looks to be just what he is a generous elderly old man.

It's good that you have no plans to show any origin to the plague because that is besides the point, the point should always be story and characters it would be good to hear their theories though its likely they'd asked why in the beginning.

I am really pleased you made it clear that ALL deceased with brain matter turn into zombies, thanks to Resident Evil, 28 Days Later and Dawn Remake people always assume its a infectious plague passed on by bites. I think it starts out where all the dead rise and then months or years later, the zombies still exist, their bites still turn you but the dead stay as good old inanimate corpses.

Dan

See, I was right--it was so obvious... I fooled you. Sigh. I'll try harder next time--I promise.

Man!

It's fun to be following a monthly book again. I haven't had any comics to look forward to on a regular basis since I was maybe 14. So you had to go and make it the accountant. I had my heart set on some vicious serial- killer type hiding out in

another wing of the prison just collecting zombie heads for company. Oh well. Please please please, when the bandits or other living bad-guys or whoever (bikers are kind of played out, though) show up, give them weird zombie-body-part trophies. Like necklaces of animate heads. That would be fucked up. Talk to Adlard about it. I wanna see him draw that. Speaking of Adlard, the last page of issue 15 was one of the single most affecting images in the series so far, as good as the panel where Rick and Glenn go into Atlanta and encounter all those zombies piled around the tank. I remember his X-Files work. He's gotten incredible. So some quick, conveniently numbered suggestions for how you should be doing your job (besides the above)-

1. Can we see a zombie Donna? Or is there enough of her left?
2. Child Zombies. I think I saw one in №16, but it could've been a midget...
3. Give Carl more opportunities to use his gun. He's a good shot.
4. Seriously, the popular demand seems to be mounting. Have the guys loot an abandoned Wal-Mart.
5. Kill off somebody important soon. In the shittiest way possible. I mean it. Make us all cry.

Thanks for the legitimate reason to start hanging around comic shops again.

Ian Dennis

1. *This isn't the kind of book where dead characters keep popping up as zombies. Who KNOWS what happened to Donna...or Jim. I'd rather not see them again.*
 2. *They're around... you just have to keep an eye out for them.*
 3. *That kid's just lucky. He'll be shooting his gun again, eventually.*
 4. *We'll see.*
 5. *Tyreese falls in the Sarlacc pit next issue, promise.*
-

Dear Funk Gang,

I climbed on board the walking dead

bandwagon with issue № 8. Now that I am up to issue № 16, it's still great to be on board. Great artwork, covers, and stories in them all!

I would like to talk briefly about the covers by Tony Moore. From an artistic point-of-view, I feel that issues 8, 9, and 16 are the best so far. Issue №8; You show us the effect of ice and snow on zombies. I cannot recall any media, including movies and comics, that deals with this area. Very nice thoughts! By the way, the simple, open design of this cover caught my eye on the comic rack. Issue №9: A reflection in a zombie eye-beautiful idea! The eye is scratched, glazed over, covered with decay and a big fly....yummy! It looks like Rick is getting sneaked up from behind by this zombie. Issue № 16: Best illustration of zombies...period! I noticed something usually forgotten in Zombie drawings. The fingers, fingernails, teeth, mouth, and upper shirt are covered in a brownish, reddish color. This means they found some previously "alive" folk sometime in the past to munch on...nice inclusion. The rest of their bodies are done well with pale blue skin and pale eyes. I loved the details of flies swarming them too.

As far as the artwork inside (by Charlie).... wonderfull! Charlie's work in issue №16 is showing some new twists. More facial expressions, viewpoints, and even more contrasts. He is really starting to find his niche and personalize these characters. I love it.

As far as Thomas Richards being the, um, "head-cutter" in №16...no surprise there Robert. It's always the quiet, polite ones, ain't it? He wasn't in prison for tax fraud was he... probably more like serial killing? Just goes to show Rick's gang probably should do a more thorough background check next time before staying with a new group.

Let's hope...

I always get worried that the stories will get boring and I will lose interest in buying new ones. This has almost happened a few times. The group starts talking (blah,blah,blah), the group gets angry at each other(blah,blah,blah!), someone gets killed (ho-hum). Some new ideas come in though to keep me reading... yeah! In short, keep up the good work. Okay....now for some interesting thoughts:

1. Even if zombies could happen, rigormortis (which is where the blood pools up in the lowest

part of the body after death because it no longer pumps through the body's system) would set in. This means the muscles would seize up and eventually lose all mobility. Sorry guys...no moving zombie is possible.

- 1. You can't pick and choose what's realistic and what's not. In my book once the dead is up and walking, it's all thrown out the window. Who KNOWS how that works. Rigormortis doesn't seem to be a problem.*
2. When you get to issue № 75 and start to write in the purple aliens with laser beams, don't forget the other nice suggestions: A. Talking Owls B. Invincible "crossovers" C. Tyreese flying like a helicopter In fact, put them all in a wrestling ring "death match" with a tag team of zombies. My money is on the talking owls....that would be a "hoot" if they win.
- 2. A "hoot!" GROAN! Actually, I think the suggestion was Tyreese FLYING a helicopter, but seeing him fly LIKE a helicopter seems much more interesting. I am counting the days until issue 75.*
3. I guess I am the only one who bought the "Dawn of the Dead" remake. Zombie's that run? Zombie's that climb and jump? Zombies that increase in population to thousands and thousands? Now that's really scary! C'mon, admit it...you guys feel these new zombies would upset your "fantasy world". No more walking around and shooting slow witted zombies and raiding shopping malls at leisure. Too bad!
- Till the next zombie attack.....
Tracy Kent
- 3. You don't have a chance with running zombies. It's better if the hero has a chance. I don't HATE running zombies, I just prefer the slow ones. Besides, how would they move that well with rigormortis and all that?*

Dear Robert,

Well, first we get the general praise out of the way. I jumped on board with the first two trades (bought them both together, thanks to their fabulously low price), and I've bought every issue since. It has bumped Ex Machina from my favorite slot, and has inserted itself firmly into my all time favorite list. Every issue I've read has evoked a strong

emotional response from me, something that is becoming increasingly rare across all forms of storytelling. Your dialogue is masterful, and “sounds” very real.

Now, on to more specific praise. Issue №16, while not my favorite (issue №14 holds that honor), was still absolutely fantastic. I was happy beyond words to see that Tyreese survived, and his speech about his daughter nearly brought a tear to my eye. I was also “pleased” to see that I had guessed the identity of the decapitator correctly. (COME ON, who DIDN’T?) I knew that creepy Thomas was up to no good the moment I laid eyes on him. I guess I should be used to these heart stopping cliffhangers by now, but they keep catching me off guard.

Special kudos to you for your excellent characterization. Most people will list Tyreese or Rick as their favorites, but mine go a little more offbeat. My faves are Carl and Sophia. The scene where Sophia asks Carl to be her boyfriend was so cute it made me physically weak.

I bet you like Disney movies too, don't you?

Please keep up the great book, I'll buy it for as long as you keep cranking them out.

Brian Clark Chicago, IL

P.S. Lighten up on Herschel, will you? You've been a real son a bitch to him.

Hershel's almost out of kids, so one way or another he's bound to stop losing them y'know? I think things will be looking up for Hershel real soon, but that's probably a lie.

Dear Letter Hacks,

I was out of the comic book world for about 10 years until I picked up Wizard Magazine 160 and read their article on TWD. That weekend, I made the trip into town to see if the local comics store had any issues. The kid behind the counter handed me both the paper trades. I read them both that night, fell in love with the story, the art and the characters. Later that week, I read them again at work. I proceeded to go back to the store, bought issue 14, ordered 13 and signed up to have the book pulled for me when they come out.

I can honestly say that I am hooked and find

myself wondering what will happen next. I have my roommate hooked and even the girlfriend is reading the book now.

The art in this book is like none I have ever experienced before. When the action hits I find myself reading faster. When the book slows, I read slower. I can really make a connection. One thing I don't understand is why Hershel is getting such a hard time from your readers? There the guy is, on his own property, wife gone, an undead son in the barn, 10 mouths to feed, a limited amount of food and his not so bright neighbor shoots some kid. He did what was morally right in the situation and saved his life. He even allowed a group of very hungry strangers stay on his property, feeding them, and keeping them relatively safe while the boy healed up. Then they have a zombie wander by and the hotshot cop wants to kill it while Hershel believes that it can be saved. The man proceeds to lose two more of his kids and if that's not enough the hotshot cop thinks he's a permanent resident and start making demands to just move in on the food and family that Hershel has obviously worked his whole life to attain.

See, Hershel's not a bad guy. I think he's got more than enough reader sympathy these days, though.

I really felt for the guy and never thought that Rick and his group were welcome the whole time. Why they thought they were, seemed a bit selfish.

I like how Hershel managed to bounce back mentally, apologize to Rick and decided to come to the prison with everyone. He even starts to work on the soil to plant food to feed everyone. Then the guy loses two more children. I'm surprised the poor guy hasn't snapped yet! I love the Hershel character, he seems like one of the more realistic of the bunch, I hope he's around for a while. Someone has to think long term and he knows how to grow food, I hope the others realize this.

A couple questions...

1) Why doesn't anyone seem to think about using propane grills? We always see people building a fire to cook their food or just not cooking at all. Propane grills and propane should be easy to find and it's a great way to cook. You'd think that there would have been one on the camper...

Dale was all out of propane and they haven't been able to find more.

2) Why don't we see people reading more educational books? I know that if I were in the situation I would be trying to find as much information as I could that may come in useful. Survival guides, farming, delivering a baby, first aid, etc.

They haven't found a bookstore yet--if only the prison had a library...

3) Are they going to make an ammo run anytime soon? When Rick and Glen made their run into Atlanta, they filled up a shopping cart and had to ditch that. How many guns and how much ammo could they really carry while running for their lives? Then they had to teach everyone how to shoot, which would have eaten up all kinds of ammo. You touched on this after they cleared their way into prison, but they have got to be almost out of bullets.

Keep up the great work!

Thanks,
Mike Gineman

3) They are, in fact, almost out of bullets, which I think has been mentioned a couple times by now. Although, if you're recall, Glenn and Rick made it out of Atlanta with most of the ammo they took.

Dear Robert Kirkman,

I just got into comics last year, when I picked up some trades on a whim. I heard a lot of great things about the Walking Dead, and ended up buying the first two trades in December. I inhaled them, and have been reading the individual issues since 13, anxiously awaiting my next fix. You had me worried with issue 15, leaving me hanging on the fate of my favorite character, Tyreese. Thankfully you gave him the coolest moment so far in the series when Rick finds him in issue 16. I was a little disappointed that you revealed the killer so soon, I was looking forward to the tension building as more people are dying and accusations are flying. However I'm completely confident that the direction you're taking the story will be far more exciting.

Like many other fans I was a little disappointed in Charlie Adlard's replacement of Tony Moore. At first glance Adlard's art seems simpler and duller. However over these past 10 issues with Adlard on board, I have come to really

appreciate his storytelling abilities. Take for example issue 14, bottom half of page 4, where the inmates are confessing their crimes. With these four panels Adlard is able to fully convey each of the inmates' personalities. In fact the way he draws their eyes pretty much sums them up. That is talent.

I have a couple of questions on the series, hopefully they haven't already been asked:

1. Any chance of Adlard, Rathburn, or Moore making an appearance in Letter Hacks, commenting on and answering questions related to the art?

These things are done so last minute it would be impossible to grab them on a whim, but if there were ever a specific question for them I'd probably hunt them down for an answer.

2. How much of what you have planned for the characters and story do you share with your artists? Are they finding out as they receive your scripts, or do you tell them everything you have planned?

I chat with Charlie and Cliff on the phone about the grand scheme of things from time to time. They know most of the big stuff that's going to happen. Most of the little stuff that happens in the issues isn't even known to me until I finish the script so they're not kept in the dark very long.

3. Which deceased character would you most like to still be able to write about?

Isaac Milton

I have no regrets. I liked Jim a lot, but hey... it was his time to go.

And that's it for letters folks! I hope you're happy, because I finally sat down and made those goddamn character sheets for you. Now you can totally look at characters faces and see their names under them. I probably won't be running this every issue, because taking up six pages in every issue with this seems kinda stupid, but we'll be running updated versions from time to time. ENJOY!

There's now a Walking Dead wiki for all that.

See you next month!

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

And we're back! Newest WALKING DEAD editor Amanda here, and thrilled to be getting into some recent letters... not that the old Hacks aren't just as fun. Thanks to everyone writing in, keep 'em coming! By the time you're reading this some fun, new, exciting TWD stuff is on shelves. If you haven't been picking up SKYBOUND X and following along with RICK GRIMES 2000 make sure to swing by your local shop for a copy—it's bonkers—and don't miss out on Clementine's first appearance in SKYBOUND X #1 either! Before I turn it over, I can't not call out Michonne, whose arrival in color this issue is just as good as it was in black and white.

Woo! Michonne, Kirkman here. I do most of my chatting about this issue in the Cutting Room Floor section so I'm not going to repeat things here. Let's just dive right into some NEW MAIL!

Did I welcome Amanda, yet? She's awesome. Welcome, Amanda! NEW MAIL! HERE GOES! 3... 2... 1... GO!

Hi Mr. Kirkman,

Years ago when I first saw The Walking Dead in single issues at my LCS, I turned a complete blind eye to its awesomeness because it was in black and white. For some reason or another, I have always hated reading b&w comic books. Whatever it is, I have a similar hatred for black and white movies even though I am a giant movie buff.

You're missing out on some good stuff!

When I heard that you were reprinting all of the single issues in color, I was all in (You had me at color). And having special features around your creative process for that issue is just perfect icing on an amazing cake. I am an amateur comic book writer who often struggles at the overall process. You have inspired me to try a different method for page by page story setup. So thank you for that!

Along with this "Deluxe" version of The Walking Dead, I am also enjoying Fire Power and Die!Die!Die!. I just started watching Invincible on Amazon Prime and it is my new favorite series (animated or live-action). Any chance you may come out with an Invincible Omnibus series or better yet reprinting a "Deluxe" version of Invincible in single issues? I know it is already in color. But I would love to read single issues of Invincible with your creative process for this series spelled out (5 or so years ago, Valiant Comics came out with Special Edition issues with the writers' and artists' behind the scenes process spelled out). Make it happen. PLEASE?!?

Sincerely,
Jelani G.

Well, you can already pick up INVINCIBLE compendiums that collect the full series in three oversized volumes, but the original collections, which are getting some recent reprints because of the animated show, have some of those fun, behind-the-scenes details.

While there are no plans to start doing INVINCIBLE DELUXE anytime soon... you never know! I think it would result in a complete revolt from the editorial department here at Skybound... but that doesn't rule it out!

Hello my wonderfully amazing duo!

The past several months have been the highlight of my life since July 2019 and July 2020 (Negan Lives!). Life's felt more... full, for me. Despite what's been going on in this crazy world we all share, TWD has always been my safe space and I'm happy to still experience it until I'm nearly 27. (I was 9-10 when I started!)

I thought I'd do my usual and ask y'all some questions, especially since Letter Hacks DELUXE doesn't come up as often (it should!). Pick and answer as you may.

1. How are the covers in the back of every Deluxe issue selected? Obviously not every issue had a variant but surely there's some process right? I'm sure the majority have both read the original run AND watched the show but it's just irked me when I see these Michonne covers when she hasn't appeared yet (until this issue!) or seeing Carl's you-know-what when that doesn't happen for a WHILE. I'm just being anal, I think.

It's been over 10 years since the original series run, I think we get a pass on potential spoilers by this point. Quite honestly, we just love showing off as much art as we can and try to run it in order as needed for space.

Frankly, it's something I struggle with in Cutting Room Floor quite often. But at this point... I think it's better to have some spoilers here and there in this book rather than not reveal cool behind the scenes info or show off cool covers.

2. As I've heard straight from the colorful Dave McCaig (no pun intended), this project has been well underway since 2016. He tweeted about reaching Issue 100 recently. If the rate goes the same then that means this series will have been fully colored by 2026. That means we can get the final couple dozen or so issues weekly then, right?! :D

Are you trying to kill us?

We could probably go weekly now and not catch up to McCaig... maybe. The twice monthly schedule is not

because of McCaig, it's the sweet spot that allows us to get through the run twice as fast, without overwhelming people with too much stuff too soon.

3. Back to cover talk—it looks like milestone issues like №1 and №19 get a heavy load of covers. I guess it's good to get ahead and ask you this very important question: Will Issue №100 *drumroll* have ONE HUNDRED COVERS? If this is the case I would love to have one of the cover slots. I gave the idea, so why not give me a chance? My art will improve by 2024, I'm sure. ;-)

Really though, are you trying to kill us?

*Hey! Now THERE'S an idea! Let's get started on those #100 covers right now! What do you say guys? *all of editorial jumps out the same window together**

4. Surely there's some more TWD storytelling in you, right? Like an extension of that Issue 75 bonus ending or something? It sure would be nice if that was a thing, or something... wocka wocka. (This is me telling you to promote the release of SKYBOUND X!)

Nicely done! Yes, we are expanding the bonus ending to issue #75 (spoilers!) into RICK GRIMES 2000, a feature that will be running in ALL FIVE ISSUES of SKYBOUND X! It features a new story by me and great art by Ryan Ottley, Cliff Rathburn and someone you may know named Dave McCaig!

I'm done with the questions now. This is a really personal part (that can be printed or not) but I really missed you guys. Though TWD Deluxe is just a re-experience of the series in color with extra content in the back, the thing that really hits me in the heart is the creator/editor-to-fan communication. It's what really brings me joy as a TWD fan (which I've been half my life!) and why I always wanted to write in during the original series run. A better part of my childhood and adolescence was The Walking Dead, Skybound and the Letter Hacks. It's probably cringe to say but I wouldn't be who I am today if it wasn't for you guys. Thanks for being my light during the dark, and all that other sappy stuff. You guys ROCK!

Thank you Robert, Tony, Charlie, Dave, Rus, David, Sean, Arielle, and Andres for the Deluxe series thus far and I cannot wait to have a reason to live another 8 years! (seriously, you fucked me up ending the series the first time). Sorry for so much cover talk lol.

Your absolute grateful fan for life,
Andy Gasal
Vermont, USA

P.S., it's been weird seeing the old letters mentioning Cliff Rathburn when he doesn't have a part in the Deluxe run. Any plans to bring him in for variants?!

Thanks for being on for the journey, Andy! This gives me a reason to live for another 8 years too!

You guys are both making me worry about you! Everyone knows the reason to live long past another 8 years is the never-ending stream of Fast and Furious movies... right?

Hey, Sean, Robert and everyone at Skybound.

I've been a fan of TWD Universe since about last year when I got into the show just after the airing of 10x16. I initially started reading the comics just to compare the first few issues to the first season but I got hooked and I just finished the last volume yesterday, and man did it leave me in TEARS. I realized I had nothing left to read and with the new show adaptation of INVINCIBLE recently coming out, I've decided to start reading that series. This is my first time writing into letter hacks. I always loved reading them after an issue to see what kind of questions the fans raised but I particularly liked when Robert would argue with fans. I'm very happy that Steven Yeun has been nominated for an Oscar, not only because he's an AMAZING actor but also because he's also from the great state of Michigan. I also just want to say that I'm SUPER exited for the next new letter hacks because of the MAJOR character that'll have just been introduced in full color. I have a couple questions for you guys if you don't mind.

1.) Is there going to be multiple artists for Skybound X or will it just be just Charlie and Ryan on Rick Grimes 2000?

SKYBOUND X features a whole bunch of new stories from a number of past and upcoming Skybound creators. For RICK GRIMES 2000 though it'll be Robert, Ryan, Cliff, Dave, and Rus on board for the whole story, with chapters in each issue of SKYBOUND X!

2.) Do you guys play any survival-horror games? Like Resident Evil or Silent Hill?

I haven't had time to play the two most recent Resident Evil games... but I plan to, someday. I love those games.

3.) Robert, did you always plan on having the words on the back of the trades come back in the last issue or is that something you just made up when writing the script of №193?

I don't want to spoil the Cutting Room Floor section of issue #193!! But no... that wasn't planned from the beginning.

Sincerely,
Jayden- a dumb, high school student, walking dead fanatic.

P.S. I just want to thank you for opening my eyes to the world of comics and graphic novels.

Jayden, excited for you to be a part of the comics and graphic novels family. If you're looking for some other recommendations, I'll just toss out INVINCIBLE, ULTRAMEGA, FIRE POWER, and THE SIX SIDEKICKS OF TRIGGER KEATON to name a few.

From a former dumb high school student to a current one, thanks for writing in, Jayden!

Walking Dead Team,

Interesting how you put my letter in the Issue that was released after Clementine's first comic appearance was announced. Was that purposeful or coincidental? ;)

I appreciate you including my letter. It made my month to have my questions answered and to just see my name in the Walking Dead Letter Hacks.

I will admit, I had one final question that I held back for a different time because I already had asked so many. As all 193 issues are being colored, are any of the specials going to be colored? Morgan & Duane's Christmas? The Governor Special? "Here's Negan?" Michonne's Special? Tyreese, Chris and Julie's Special? And "Negan Lives?"

Appreciate you all and your hard work.

Tyre'k Hyde

I'd say, "Never say never."

The plan is for everything to be fully colored eventually. EVERYTHING!

Kirkman and Co.,

Walking Dead was the reason I jumped into the world of comics 5-6 years ago. It has been great being able to re-read this series in color! It really captures some unique details that I feel I may have missed in my first read through. Also, all of the covers have been fantastic so far! I am definitely looking forward to all of the variants for issue №19 and hope to see issue №108 get the same amount, both contain my favorite first appearances! I am really looking forward to the recently announced Skybound X issues and Rick Grimes 2000! July can't come soon enough!

Cheers!
Brock Brandt
Mason City, IA

P.S.
Will we get issues 1-16 of Solid Blood? I would love to see a much more 'lively' version of Michonne in a alternate universe sometime.

Glad you've been enjoying the series in full color so far! We've got plans for all the first appearances, don't you worry.

Solid Blood? What's Solid Blood? Oh, wait... is that the weird comic from another dimension? Seems like issues #1-16 already exist... just not here!

Kirkman,

I believe I started picking up the series with issue 10 and back then the issues were a little less scheduled. I think I got issue 11 shortly after then a long stretch before 12.

If I remember correctly the goal was to get 11 issues out a year and look what's turned into. Crazy.

Look how far we've come!

Issues 13-48 are about the best things I've ever read. It's heart stopping time and time again. It was around these issues I started writing in most months. I loved this series so much but hated watching everyone get tortured or killed off.

All this being said, your cutting room floor for issue 12's notes has "Debbie w/ morning sickness" and my question is: who is Debbie?

:/

I'm enjoying this ride

Brandon Borzelli
Lebanon, NJ

HA! I didn't even notice the Debbie thing! Writing as many books as I do, I often get characters names mixed up. So that was clearly referring to Lori, but I used Mark's mothers name from INVINCIBLE! OOPS!! Good catch!

Dear Robert Kirkman, as many of the fans I see writing into TWD deluxe this is my first time sending in a letter. I have become a fan of TWD only recently. I saw a couple of episodes with a friend during season 6, but could not get into the show. When we were all forced to stay home due to quarantine I started the show from the beginning and quickly got hooked. I love these kinds of stories, just seeing how far people will go to survive.

I am a healthcare employee and can honestly say that COVID-19 made life very hard and TWD was a light in a bit of a dark time so I just wanted to say thank you for giving me a way to relax and take my mind of things. Now I am reading the walking dead deluxe and loving it! I just finished issue №13 and can't wait for more.

Of course I have to ask you a question before ending this long letter and that would be do you have a favorite episode of the TV show?

Austin Jewell from Michigan

If TWD was how you were able to RELAX then we know things must have been incredibly tough. Thank you for all you've done and are doing, Austin.

If I had to pick a favorite episode, and that's really hard for me to do, I'd have to say CLEAR from season 3 would be it. There have been so many good episodes over the course of the long run, though. That one has just been a favorite for a long time.

Hey there Robert,

Two diehard deadhead buddies here. Really enjoying

the Cutting Room Floor. And we've got questions... What is the strangest place you have written a comic book script?

I wrote a script at the foot of my wife's bed when our son was being born. She wasn't in labor yet, I promise.

Have you ever written a script intoxicated? Did you change anything the next day or just let it fly?

Fun fact, I have never BEEN intoxicated.

What are your thoughts on taking some ideas from Fear or World Beyond and putting them in comic form? It would be interesting to explore some of these stories with a new twist.

It doesn't interest me, honestly.

With this being the TWDD debut of Michonne, where did you get the idea for Michonne's pets? We think it's one of the most iconic TWD covers ever. Totally sick!!

Hands down agree!

It came more or less from thinking practically. Zombies with no arms or lower jaw pose almost no threat... yet they would still be functional. They're not like living humans that would die from that happening. So I thought it'd be cool to see a character who used them to mask their scent to move freely amongst the dead.

A shout out to our awesome LCS Bat City Comic Professionals who donate all their profits toward child literacy programs. How cool is that?

Rot on,
Brian Lassiter
Tom McElroy
Austin, TX

We love local comics shops for many reasons, and this is a very good one.

Dear Letter Hacks.

Or

Dear Kirkman and Company.

This will be the first time I write to a comic book so I really hope you decide to print my letter. I am a big fan of TWD and have been for a very long time. I recently told my wife that I think it's the greatest story ever told. I collected the Trade Paperbacks for the initial run of the series but plan to collect every issue of the deluxe series to really complete my collection. One of the things that get me excited for the single issues is the Letter Hacks! This is content that, for a very long time, I didn't even know existed and now I get to enjoy it all. I now have 1 Question and 1 Comment. Will we ever see a volume 2+ of The Covers? And I would like to see the story of the Western Alliance mentioned in #193.

There should at some point be more volumes of THE COVERS hardcovers. We should get around to that at

some point. It is odd that we just stopped after the one.

At this point, your only hope of seeing the Western Alliance story mentioned in #193 would be if the TV show(s) pick it up and run with it. So we'll see.

Anyway. Thanks for reading my letter and thanks for making such excellent content when you created The Walking Dead.

Josh
Edmonton, Alberta

The burning question is, has your wife read TWD yet and what does she think? Thanks for writing in and supporting the series, hope you're enjoying seeing things in color!

Dear Robert Kirkman,

Man...you weren't kidding about that last panel in 15. It was downright chilling and had all the impact I remembered plus some! I've just got a few quick questions this time.

Did letter hacks/convention conversations ever inspire or change plot lines you had in mind or were they completely separate to your thought process?

I tried to keep it as separate as possible, but there were definitely a few times along the run where lettershipped me to things I should have done or been doing at times when I could course correct. Magna and Yumiko are lesbians more or less because someone wrote in and pointed out I'd never had lesbian characters in the book. I thought that was nuts and just happened to have two characters whose sexuality hadn't been defined in any way. And it made them more interesting characters and gave me more story with them. Things like that happened at least a few times in the run.

Re-reading issue #17 in the letter hacks you mentioned "...yeah, when I have kids one day I'm going to reread all these issues and hate myself." So how do you feel about that now?

Oh, I definitely hate myself... but not because of these issues. It is harder to look at some of this stuff because it hits you in a different way when you have kids.

So with Skybound X coming out and Clementine's first comic appearance, are there any other new surprises we should expect in cross-media campaigns in the not-so-distant future?

Very Respectfully,
Matthew Henricks

If we told you about them, they wouldn't be surprises now, would they?

Dear Robert and creative team,

I had forgotten what a gruesome book this was at the time - issue 15 with its bookend teen murder suicide

pacts and kid beheadings! Forgot about that or blocked it out for my mental health perhaps. It's been interesting to revisit this book as an issue to issue experience and see all the characters again. I hadn't remembered many of them that way / guess the show changes must have overpowered my memories of the group. Some are just as I remembered like Rick and Glenn but for many (Tyrese, Carol, Lori) I needed the refresher introduction as they are different in several areas. Feels kinda like how cult deprogramming must feel.

And You've got to stop with all the amazing variant covers for each of these issues. I have no self control and can't pick just one or two. I have to get them all like some weird OCD obsession so if you could knock it off that would really help me out in the ole wallet.

Turns out a lot of incredible artists just keep doing incredible art with these characters. Don't look at how many we've got for this issue...

Saw the solicit for Skybound X with not only a weekly Rick story but a Clementine story from the telltale game - what a great celebration of 10 years of Skybound. I am psyched for that too.

Walking dead 4evah...

Drew Ellinger
From The beautiful Hocking Hills of Southeast Ohio

Thanks for reading and writing in, hope you're enjoying SKYBOUND X too!

That's all for now! We'll be back in another six issues with more all-new letters, so keep sending your questions and thoughts our way, I'm thrilled to be joining the conversation! Another milestone down, many more to come.

We've still got a handful of old school Hacks below, too. Until next time, enjoy!

-Amanda LaFranco

Just look at me plugging Blockbuster online in this classic letters pages. If that doesn't date a person, I don't know what does. "Listen guys, these 8-tracks are great!" Sigh.

Thanks for reading! We'll see you all back here in six issues.

-Robert Kirkman

Big news time here at The Walking Dead Central. The Eisners were very kind to us this year. The book received not one but two nominations. One to Charlie Adlard as best penciler/inker and one to Tony Moore for best cover artist. These guys bust their humps all year long and both really deserve these nominations, congrats, guys.

In other news, I've been trying to keep a lid on this, because, well, I got letters about it... complaining, but I just got numbers and we're still going up, we haven't

stopped going up... this book just keeps selling better. As I stated before I don't say this to brag, I just say this because I know, the only readers that actually read this, care, you guys like the book. I figure you guys would like to know that the book you enjoy is on solid ground. So I just wanted to let you know. Now back to your regularly scheduled program.

Oh, and before I start into the mail I gotta say, I recently signed up for "Blockbuster Online" the mail order DVD rental thing... and it's totally sweet! As a guy who really doesn't think to highly of leaving the house, the future sure is turning out pretty cool. Between khepri.com, Amazon.com, Ebay, and this... and my wife buying groceries... I almost never need to leave the house. I'm a shut in! WOO!

Letters? Yeah, sure--we'll answer some of those... let's go.

Dear Dead Crew,

Wow! What else can you possibly throw at us? (I probably shouldn't have asked that)

Your book has the best characterizations that I've read in a long time. Characters are what give every great comic, novel and film staying power, something you can read or watch over and over again. Like with Romero's Dawn of the Dead, all the fans will tell you they watched it a hundred times because of Peter, Roger, Flyboy, and Fran. People actually cared what happened to them, and because it kicks ass all over today's cardboard cutouts. I read the Walking Dead every month anticipating what is going to happen to Rick and the Gang every month. Rick is definitely the headliner, but without everyone else the book wouldn't be as exciting, compelling nor as interesting. Hell, with the good writing you could put a chimp in the lead role and still sell crazy amounts of the book. Your characters are worth remembering.

I have just a few questions for you guys,

- 1.) What books inspired you guys to get into comics?
- 2.) Who is your favorite Romero actor?
- 3.) Any good convention horror stories?

Robert- keep up the awesome writing, and I love reading Letter Hacks, don't ever get rid of em'.

Charlie- top of the line, you bring the writing to life(or dead)

Tony-BAD ASS Covers!

Thanks putting out a quality book,

Gary Timmons
Bear Lake, MI

1.) Charlie's busy, but for me it was Savage Dragon, hands down. I mean all comics in general helped but if I had to pick one... it'd be Dragon. That's just a GREAT comic book. And fuck that guy for become publisher of Image so I look like a kiss up when I say that.

2.) *Duane Jones, from Night of the Living Dead... followed closely by Ken Foree, and an honorable mention goes to Tony Todd for the Night of the Living Dead 1990 remake.*

3.) *Nah, nothing crazy's every happened to me.*

Robert Kirkman.

Great comic, I've been reading since issue five, (Ordered issues 1-12 over amazon, each in Volumes, also currantly ordered Vol.3 which goes from 13-18), and I say, so far it's pretty good, including the fact it's more then a mindless gun and run comic. But overall it's wonderful and keep it up, (Please don't kill Glenn :(for some reason he's Da bomb!).

I didn't kill him THIS issue? Is that enough?

Anyways the reason I'm actually contacting you is the fact how infection spreaded without bites or scratches on Chris and Julie also Hershel's two daughters and Shane. I Managed to buy issues 15-16 (Couldn't wait for the damn Vol.3) and well a bit surprised at how the five died. I mean the so-called virus couldn't be airborne? So it has to be water borne, meaning some stupid zombie fell into a lake or major water reserve and contaminated it. Also animals, animals drinking the water itself must have spreaded the infection when humans (Such as Shane) hunted and ate the animals (Deers, rabbits,etc.). I Mean it dose seem logical besides one part, what prevents infection from happening? Why after death? I'm stumped on that part so far, but yet I could be wrong?

Man, this must be crackpot month.

Anyways, good luck on the series and rock on man.

P.S. If you can, add a bit more humor tho, I mean sometimes the comic feels a bit morbid with death happening twenty-four seven.

Michael Slate

I'll see about making things a bit more funny. The letters columns are funny sometimes right? Sometimes?

Kirkman,

First off, I'm going to have to agree with some previous letters and say I definitely want a poster from this series. Any of the covers would be great, and issue 17 was one of my favorites. Also I'm glad to see that TWD is on a slightly less chaotic schedule. If anyone else gets tired of waiting for the next Walking Dead comic to come out, I did find the perfect solution...buy Invincible! Anyway, I was happy to see Thomas' face pounded into mush last issue. It's bad enough that they have to deal with the zombies. If only Rick had remembered that there really are no black serial killers, its always the creepy looking white guy. Hopefully they don't throw him to the zombies

though, you'd hate to give them more of a reason to hang around the prison. I'm thinking that in trying to get the riot gear, they're going to set a bunch of prisoner-zombies free.

Man... I just can't fool you guys these days can I? I'm going to have to try harder for the next few issues. You guys are really keeping me on my toes these days.

Well, thanks for the excellent stories and be sure to print my letter since it'll be a good Invincible plug. There's no reason we all shouldn't be reading both comics (alright, I'll stop sucking up).

Andy Robak

Consider your letter printed Andy. And thanks for the Invincible plug. It's hard to cross-promote the two because they're such vastly different books, but if any of you out there like superhero comics, and since you're already reading a comic I'm sure there's a good chance some of you do, give Invincible a shot. If you don't like it... hey, you're only out three dollars.

HOLY SHIT, MAN!!!!

Rick is going off the deep end real damn quick! When he went out to re-kill (I guess that works) Shane, I thought it was a little bit nutty. In issue 17, I've come to realize that he's just bugfuck insane! He beat the tar outta that guy, then he says that he wants to hang him for all to see what happens to people who break the law in this New World Order that he's concocted in his mind over the last five or six months? He's turning into some kind of whacked-out, Hitler-esque wannabe dictator of the remnants of the human race. And he was such a nice guy at first, too...

This book is messed up. This is one of the most human stories I have ever read. I started to pick it up because it was the first comic I'd ever seen on the shelf that was about zombies, and the crazy thing about it is that I almost don't give a rat's ass that there are zombies in it anymore! It ranks right up there with Ennis' Preacher, that one guy who's name I can't remember for some reason's Midnight Nation, and White Wolf Game Studio's Demon: The Fallen Trilogy, by Greg Stoltz, who must have sold his soul for deep inside knowledge of all things demonic. TWD is now my №1 favorite.

Not just because of the story, either. You bitch about having so many letters in Letter Hacks sometimes, but there are a lot of books and movies out there I never would have heard of if some of those letters hadn't been printed. I picked up and read Reign of the Dead and RotD: Apocalypse End, both of which are great, solely because people mentioned them in their letters. Admittedly, I was a little disappointed with the OVERLY MASSIVE amount of plugging that you did in №17, but I'm sure I'll be picking up a few of the non-Marvel titles you mentioned (sorry, I do love your writing, but I haven't read Marvel ever since that Maximum Clonage crap. It really killed them for me.)

Oh, come on... one minute you're telling me how great the letters column is for recommended reads and then you're complaining about me plugging some books? I'm telling you—there's a lot of good books out there. Give 'em a shot.

Anyway, like so many of your other readers, I have questions/ideas that will probably only get answered in roundabout ways/not be used because they're not yours;

1) Kill Rick already. He deserves it. One of these nights, Lori should just feel pity for her husband because he's gone completely insane and blow his brains out in his sleep. Be nice about it, he still deserves a good, clean, quick, honorable death, not something horrific.

Man, you guys turn on people QUICK.

2) Is Tyreese hiding some plan of vengeance somewhere deep behind those eyes of his? I mean, he saw his daughter die, come back as a zombie, get re-killed by Rick, strangled Chris, waited until he came back so he could re-kill him, and plunged himself into a room full of zombies with nothing but a hammer, and lived through it all. Now he's all cheery and happy-go lucky (YATTA!), almost like he hasn't a care in the world. Either he's gonna snap and kill Rick himself for some reason (it's always the quiet ones), or he's one tough, hardcore son-of-a-bitch. If I was one of the survivors, and he became our leader, right now I'd shit solid gold if he told me to.

Tyreese is mighty awesome. I'll just leave it at that.

3) I haven't heard hardly any mention of God or a higher power from any of the characters mouths, unless it was followed by dammit. Did any of them have any kind of religious beliefs before this zombie thing went down, and if so, how do they feel about it now? On the topic of religion, are there any crazy religious zealots out there, stockpiling armaments and destroying zombies by themselves or with groups? Or at the very least some bad-ass group of militant altar boys or something? Or preachers that believe this is God's will, and are trying to spread the word that mankind deserves a zombie plague for their sins (scratch that, enough people said you took the prison idea from Reign of the Dead, that would be too much)? Or groups of kids living all Lord of the Flies style?

Hershel is very religious. You'll be hearing more from him on the subject as time goes on. As for the other stuff... just keep reading.

4) Hasn't anyone else from the area near the prison thought about holing up there? It would seem like a good idea to me in that situation.

We'll be seeing more of the area around the prison later on in the series. All will be explained.

5) Is anyone with the proper medical know how and equipment even out there trying to find an answer to the zombie problem, cures, vaccines and the like? Boy, after all Hershel's been through, finding out it WAS a good idea to keep them zombies would break him, if he hasn't broken already...

There may be someone out there... but who knows if we'll ever see them.

6) If I was safely holed up in a prison or someplace during a zombie menace, and one of my friends/family members got killed and came back, I'd lock them down somewhere so I could see how long it took them to decompose. I figure it would help to know that, as by the time they decompose more than likely all the previous zombies would be gone, too. That, and I must admit I'd feel a sense of satisfaction at the ability to occasionally point and laugh at a few of my friends if they did something stupid and got themselves zombified. This doesn't seem to have crossed any of the characters' minds, though.

I think you are a heartless bastard.

7) Now I'll suggest a few things to all the readers who helped me find cool stuff. I highly recommend that everyone who reads this buys HBO's Carnivale Season 1 on dvd, and records all of the 2nd season episodes that are still On-Demand. Maybe if HBO gets even more money, there will be a TWD series on HBO one day. Also, pick up DC's Blood of the Demon. It's written by Will Pfeifer, from my home town. I think he even used to play live-action Vampire the Masquerade in the same group I did.

I've met Will, he's a good guy. I only watched one episode of Carnivale and it wasn't bad but I just never sought it out. I find that if you watch two episodes of an HBO show you're hooked for life... and there's only so many hours in the day.

Okay, thanks for listening! I'm very happy to hear that you already have plans for issue 25. That means I'll still get to read at least 8 more issues, hopefully plenty more! Can't wait to see Morgan and Duane again, and the aliens in №75 (okay, I do hope the alien thing is a joke, and not something you're serious about but making seem like a joke so as to throw us off when it actually happens).

Man, I've got plans for this book well past 50. As long as numbers hold this book will be around for a good long time. And yeah... the alien thing is a complete joke.

When the zombies arise, here's to the comic geeks taking over the world!

(chug, slam)

Dan Haskell
Rockford, IL

P.S. Obviously you've seen Yatta. Any idea what the hell G-R-double E-N-L is? GREENL?

It's PEOPLE! PEEEEOPLE!!!!

Okay, boys... that's it for the letters column this month. I hope you enjoyed it. I'll see you all back here next month, right? RIGHT?!

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hey, readers, Amanda here! Coming off the craziness that was #19, I love that issue #20 starts with a quieter moment on the other side of the fence. We don't often get a chance to see the walkers' behavior on their own, and you almost want to feel bad for the one who gets tripped up on his own intestines. Almost. In fact, this issue has a lot of little zombie moments that remind us just how dangerous they can be. Lori is rightfully more concerned about the humans around them, but if we've learned anything it's that you can't let your guard down, not even for the dead.

Just like the inevitability of more tragedy to come, we're back with some old Letter Hacks from July 2005.

Thanks go out to all you deads and deadettes for picking up our twentieth issue! The big two-oh! Ah, twenty, too young to be in love... too old not to be. It's good to officially make it into the big numbers on this book. Hope you people are enjoying the story so far, it shows no signs of ending just yet.

Our first order of business is to welcome aboard a new member to our creative team. As of this issue, Rus Wooton has come on board as our new letterer! That's right, kids, I'll no longer be personally throwing the word balloons on the page and pointing the tails at the person who's talking... that'll be all up to Rus. He's been lettering INVINCIBLE for about TEN issues now, so no worries, we're in good hands. I mean it when I say that aside from Chris Eliopoulos and John Workman, Rus is the ONLY guy I'd trust to letter the book. He's a real pro so I hope you'll all give him a warm welcome.

In other news. I don't know how many of you out there also read my superhero comic, INVINCIBLE but I just approved the printing proofs for the Invincible: Ultimate Collection hardcover. So that should be in stores NOW at the same time as this issue. It's a big, thick book... full of all kinds of goodies, on top of issues 1-13. So it's the PERFECT starting point for anyone who may be interested in how I write things that don't include zombies. Also, it's a steal at \$34.95 and it makes an EXCELLENT gift. So pick it up. If for nothing else, pick it up for the introduction by Brian Michael Bendis.

So, uh... letters... you want some? Here you go!

Mr. Kirkman

Wow...been reading comics since 1990 (Jesus, has it been 15 years already?) and yours is one of the most entertaining. It's not often you find good storylines and interesting characters; and while I love George Romero's work to death, your book beats the unliving crap out of "Toe Tags." Anyways...I just

have a quick question or two, if you wouldn't mind answering them.

1. Where the hell is the military? Being in the service myself, I admit to being a little one sided...but they couldn't all have been wiped out. Even if you did put all armed personnel in the city to protect the civilians, you'd still need military bases to provide logistical support (helicopters, air crews, munitions dumps, communication posts, etc.) During a national emergency like 9/11, military bases close their gates and have security levels that'd make Colonel Klink sit down and cry. I find it difficult to believe they'd all be over run...many bases have heavy brick gates or fences, much like your prison...it wouldn't be difficult at all to hold out.

We just haven't gotten to that yet. Sit tight.

2. A previous letter writer mentioned rigor mortis. Unless I'm mistaken, rigor mortis wears away after a day or two as the body decays, which brings me to my last question-

Hey, check that out... a good explanation.

3. Are the bodies decaying at a normal rate? I wouldn't think so, but I do wonder if you have some kind of formula as to how long it takes. If I recall, Dr. Logan in Day of the Dead mentioned something about the decay process taking nearly twelve years before a zombie would become immobile... but I doubt you're using Romero as scripture.

Looking forward to some more great reading

C.S. Muncy

The bodies are NOT decaying at a normal rate. They are decaying but it varies so much from zombie to zombie depending on climate, activity and so on... there's no way to peg down an actual timeline. Also, our characters are worried about more important things at the moment.

Rick has to die. There I said it. He seems to cause more trouble than he's worth, especially in issue 17 when he says.

"Listen to me, I'm a cop-I've been trained to make decisions like this. I'm the only one here in a position of authority... That's what you all look up to me for... I'm in charge"

He deserves to die for making such an egotistical statement. The person who says they should be the leader is the one person who should NOT be the leader. Be wary of those who desire power. Like

didn't we learn anything from Plato's Republic about what makes a good leader? I guess not.

KILL RICK

Best wishes (on killing off Rick)
Wes Monillas

I'll get right on that.

Dear TWD,

Two letters printed! I am officially the envy of my L.C.R. (Local Comic Retailer). I shop at Comic Cave here in Columbus and it was Mike that got me started on your book. Most of the employees there seem to be big fans. I've been reading since No. 3. I collect both the monthlies and the TPBs.

Unfortunately I got No. 18 before No. 17. I know shipping can be a problem in the industry (I've given up on Ultimates), but I'm patient enough if the work is worth it. In your case it is. I knew Andrea wouldn't get killed (her and Dale just seem like they've got some major part to play down the road) so I wasn't surprised. However, I like that Andrew and Dexter got out and got guns, great cliffhanger (though with the cover of No. 19 I'm sure the new visitor will force a temporary truce of some sort). Each of the characters, Glen and Maggie, Herschel, Tyreese and Carol, etc. seem to be coming into their own. I can fully understand how the characters have started to determine how their story is being told. So far Lori is my favorite because, as crazy as it seems, she makes the most sense. I think the longer they're at the prison the more we're going to get to know these people and the better. Keep up the good work.

As for the art, Cliff Rathburn is making a strong argument for the unsung heroes of comics. Normally all the praise goes to the writer and penciler and maybe some leftovers to the inkers. Let's hear it for the gray tones (and I remembered his name this time).

For the record I was also one of those people that first thought Tony couldn't be replaced (I'm very grateful for his covers, No. 9 is the best to date, but No. 19 looks pretty darn cool too), but Charlie is a much better storyteller in my opinion. One of the other letter writers mentioned how Charlie gets the characters across through their eyes (one of the reasons Lori is a favorite of mine) and their expressions. I think Charlie is becoming well known for his subtle, and yet powerful storytelling. Like the zombies, it creeps up on you.

On to standard numbered questions (and you can answer in letter ala Bendis without apology):

1- What type of society do you see this little group developing? Earliest settlers tried a communal approach, but found that the work/reward (as is the biggest problem with Communism) was dispersed unevenly. Rick is the clear leader (tribal patriarch) but soon he'll have to realize that he could be killed anytime and where would that leave Carl and Lori. Just a down-the-road type question.

You'll have to wait and see.

2-It seems Patricia is the resident "free-spirit" (setting Thomas free only to be attacked). We've also seen Herschel go from "caring for the undead" to slapping around his son for being "disrespectful". Will this become the foundation for "alliances" (ala Survivor), liberal and conservatives?

Would you really want me to give stuff like this away in a letters column?

3- Land of the Dead seems to be pushed up to mid July release. How many times do you think you'll see it in theater?

That all depends on how much I like it the first time.

4 - We'll we see the remnants of government by issue No. 50? (attempt to pin you down)

Probably NOT.

Keep up the great writing (or simply let the characters tell their tale and get the \$%& out of the way) and I'll keep up the reading.

Sincerely,
Merl Key

I'll do what I can. Thanks for writing Merl.

Dear Kirkman,

Well, it does seem that 18 got away from you. I know some have complained, but I like that the covers don't tend to truthfully represent the story inside. It makes the twists even more exciting. It's like Moore shows us what we expect to see (since he probably expects it at the time he draws them - before you lose control of the characters). So here goes:

1. So we're what, six to seven months after the whole zombie plague began? Are you very concerned with decomposition rates, or are you writing that off like rigor mortis and other stuff that confuses things. Adlard's zombies are getting pretty rotten.

I'm not concerned with it. There's always new zombies out there being made.

2. Are the zombies...getting smarter?

NO.

3. In issue 75, can we see the mirror universe where zombies are nice to people and have little Fu Manchus?

Maybe after the aliens come.

4. Tyreese got bit, didn't he?

Heh.

5. Could you give us a movie casting call for The Walking Dead movie? Who would Simon Pegg play?

Simon would be great for Hershel if he were a bit older. He

doesn't LOOK the part but he certainly acts well enough to play Rick. Hell, if I had my say I'd let Simon pick.

6. For Adlard (if available) - What kind of research do you do when drawing wounds and zombies? Do we really want to know?

Well, Charlie is somewhere in England sleeping right now, and this letters column is due to Image soon... so... I'll answer. Adlard has more than enough dead bodies around his house to use for reference. Just ask his neighbors... if you can find them. (I wonder if I'll be apologizing for THIS next issue).

Hey, Undead and Land of the Dead come out soon. I believe Tobe Hooper is working on a zombie movie too. If Invincible works out, maybe there will be a Walking Dead movie... One can dream.

Chris Pitts

We shall see. Hollywood is a fickle bird. Nobody can predict what may be just over the horizon.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

Zombies rock. There's no way around it and for some inexplicable reason I'll always be drawn to the Z Word. People automatically think it's the gore*. My response is a recorded one: "Zombies are a classic narrative device". They can be incredibly distant adversaries. They can also be the people closest to you. What better image is there than a husband impaling his freshly dead wife with a machete? You've got drama and horror in the same package. The 'Walking Dead' uses all of that and then some. It's got characters you can care about. It's got the violence that works with the plot. It even has *gasp* suspense. Thanks to your teams work, when people scoff at my Japanese DVD of "Zulu Cannibal Flesh Eaters PART XII" I'll be able to whip out the newest issue of "The Walking Dead". It's solid proof that zombie stories aren't restricted to hilarious disembowelments.

Sometimes you can actually care.

1. Do you ever feel pressured to put zombie action in an individual issue?

Obviously not. The zombie stuff happens when it needs to happen. It will come in waves. As the book goes on there will be large chunks of issues with consecutive zombie action... followed by large runs with NO zombies. I'll be changing things up as time goes on.

2. Will the zombies be getting smarter?

NO.

3. What do you consider to be the funniest kill in the history of zombiedom?

FUNNIEST? Something from Peter Jackson's DEAD ALIVE for sure. The priest getting impaled maybe...

I'd like to sign off by saying that the "Walking Dead" brought me and my brother together. We're such

cheapskates that we take turns buying the single issues. Just for the letters page. The decision of who gets to keep the complete set hasn't come up yet, but just like Rick said "We'll burn that bridge when we come to it." It'll probably involve an axe, glue and a blindfold.

Sincerely (At two in the morning),
Justin Decloux

Here's hoping you survive the fight with your brother. Thanks for reading.

Mr. Kirkman,

I've never written into a comic book letter column before (yeah, I know I'm the millionth one to say that). Up until wandering into a great comic shop on a whim about two months ago, I hadn't been in one in nearly a decade. It's been great getting back into reading comics, and Walking Dead is certainly one of the best, and my personal favorite right now. I bought both trades and then all the individual books up to present. The storytelling and dialogue is incredible. I can't wait to get my hands on the four Invincible trades to get more of it.

All of this is why I was so disappointed when I finished issue 18 of The Walking Dead, the first issue I had to wait a month for. Thomas's death felt like a cop-out. You did a great job of creating an intriguing premise and raising a great question: how would this makeshift society deal with justice? I couldn't wait to find out what effect an execution would have on the individuals and the dynamics of the group (especially between Rick and Lori). And then you had to have Thomas shot in an act of defense, instead of dealing with the situation of an execution and its ramifications. After demonstrating such great skill in handling other unique situations (the barn is one great example), I was really disappointed.

Hey, you win some... you lose some.

I guess the fact that this event bothered me so much is the exception that proves the rule (the rule that The Walking Dead is the best comic being published right now). Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Schuyler Schuster

Yeah, that's it. Good point.

Kirkman and Co.

I have been loving this ride that you all have been putting us on. Just got done reading №16 (I know it is later than hell to just be reading this issue, but I order my comics over the Internet, and then read them in order of least anticipation to most anticipation: you know delay the satisfaction as long as possible!!)

Anyway, after finally making it through ALL those letter pages...(Goddamn man, who d'you think you

are, BENDIS!?) I finally decided to break down and write you and let you know what a great job you have been doing. I love this book! I have been a fan of yours and Tony's since Battle Pope №1 (BTW, Congrats on getting those in color, I'm looking forward to seeing it, although Tony's style works really well in B & W) and you guys never disappoint. Charlie has been doing great since Tony left, but I still get to see Tony's work first thing. I took the hint about sharing the love around, and a huge Thumbs up to Cliff, those Gray Tones are great and just the right edge to the panels. That letterer you got could use some practice :) I have never been a huge fan of horror books, I can read them and enjoy them, but usually don't buy them. I jumped on this because of you and Tony to give it a try, and you have gotten me hooked!

I really like the idea with the jail, although it was kind of a letdown seeing the accountant doing all the killing. I kinda figured that was what was going to happen, everyone thinks accountants are only white-collar criminals...BUT it being tax season and all, I guess you just couldn't let it get by. Being an accountant myself, I know I definitely felt like cutting off a few heads by the end of tax season.

Keep up the great work!
Patrick Geer

It's always good to hear from people who found this book because of the work Tony Moore and I did on Battle Pope. You guys are the best. Where were the REST of you five years ago?!

Kirkman,

I just read issues 17 and 18, and 17 is one I've been waiting for. I loved seeing Rick finally snap. We've been building to this moment since the first issue, and it's definitely a turning point for the series. You said when you started this series that the Rick at the end would be nothing like the Rick in the first issue, and I think we're already at that point.

It just gets worse from here.

I do have to say I was a bit disappointed with the way things turned out for Thomas in issue 18. You had a guy hanging on the cover, then totally switch it up. I guess that's what you were talking about when you said the story wrote itself. Having him shot to death and thrown to the zombies just seemed too easy for him. He killed two little girls! He deserved to suffer much longer! I'm also very interested to know what development you had planned but decided to put off. I'm assuming you still plan to use it later, but when you do, can you let us know what the original plan was for this issue?

IF I still do it... I'll make sure to let you guys know.

I do really enjoy how Rick's taking charge now. He's been the leader all along, but now he's being faced with some very difficult decisions where he can't necessarily make everyone happy. How the others react to his control (especially Lori!) will be very interesting. We're also really beginning to see the

tension between Rick and Lori build up. Now, I'm really looking forward to that coming to a head.

I'm keeping it short this time... You're whole team is doing a great job, which gives me very little to complain about in my letters. Keep it up!

Jim Amato

Good to hear from you, Jim.

Dude,

Just wanted to let you know this comic is still the nuts. (*"The Nuts?"*) Definitely my most anticipated monthly. Issue 18 ruled. I am glad that Thomas didn't get hung and that Maggie shot him. One thing about seeing next month's cover is it gives you a little hint of what's coming. So, I take it you originally planned to hang him, but changed it at the last minute? Whatever, it was a nice touch.

If a good idea comes to me, and it doesn't match the cover... I'm not going to be bound to what's on the cover. I'd much prefer to do the better story. All the covers are designed to mislead you anyway so they're ALWAYS at least a little inaccurate.

Great idea adding the who's who at the end. With buying it monthly, it is good to have the reminder. Just one thing though. Under the picture of Lori you said that Rick was unaware of the affair. Yet in a previous issue, after Lori announces to the group she is pregnant, Dale mentions the possibility of Shane and Lori to Rick, and he flips out! Babbling about only getting laid once since he got back.!!

So, was that a mistake or what?

He may SUSPECT but he's not SURE it happened. More on this story as it develops--stay tuned.

keep it up dude. And man, the cliffhanger endings are awesome!

Daniel Aston

Thanks. The cliffhangers are the most fun part for me.

First Thomas kills the girls and then tries to get Andrea as well. Then Rick beats the holy crap out of him. Now that's dark but when we see Andrea's face and Rick's hands up close in №18, you know things are getting darker.

Are we done yet? No way. Glenn and Tyreese are keeping the killer under cruel conditions and then after that nutball Patricia tries to help him escape Maggie unloads her gun into Thomas! WTF?

Dark, dark, dark! I love it! Here I was expecting a hanging too. The story line and cover ended up being a great red hearing.

But wait, are we done yet? Hell no! Dexter and his

bitch boy Andrew have plans of their own. This just keeps getting better and better.

The cover of №19 looks great btw. I dig the way the dead's arms and lower jaws are removed for safety.

In №18's Letter Hacks Merl Key asks about Rick fetching Morgan and his boy. I like this idea a lot and hope we see more of them.

Morgan and Duane are still out there... somewhere.

BTW, being a F4 nut I couldn't hold out any longer and picked up foes 1-4. I'm glad I did.

Along for the ride and loving it!
Chad Cayler

Thanks for checking out Foes, man. I really appreciate it. I think it's a fun book. I had a blast writing it.

Finally, finally, I just want to say thank you Mr. Kirkman for making the best zombie comic book ever. I mean HOLY SHIT it's everything you ever wanted in a zombie comic or movie, suspense, horror, gore, action and characters you love and hate. I first got the comic at №11, yeah I know I jumped in late but I'm going to do everything I can do to get the back issues, but everywhere I go no one seems to have any back ones, just goes to show how HOT these things are. Now on to the comic, I've been reading on how Mr.Adlard is not as good as Mr.Moore but Adlard drawings are incredible and very well detailed and I don't know how you can get any better then that, so people please, LAY OFF. As for your writing top notch very impressive, it really gets you into the characters mind and makes us feel how they're feeling, very well done. I have been one of the biggest and I mean BIGGEST zombie fan since I was 7 years old. My favourite zombie movie is Day of the Dead, I probably love it more then you. Hell I love this stuff so much I wish one day the dead would really come back to life. I know that sounds crazy, but here are some questions I hope you have time to answer.

1. What zombie movie do you hate the most? And why? For me it was Return of the living dead 3, it was too much of a love story and just a joke.

I can honestly say I've NEVER hated any zombie movie I've ever watched.

2. If you were in a zombie movie what role would you want to play? Survivor, A zombie that gets killed in a gory way, A zombie that's eats somebody or someone who gets torn apart by dozens of zombies. Me I would love being torn apart, it would be such a thrill.

Human victim is cool... but I'd love being a zombie too... as long as I didn't have to rub raw animal parts on my face or anything. That's just nasty.

3. Have you heard of the movie risen, it looks and sounds scary as hell and if you haven't go to www.risenthemovie.com you won't be disappointed.

I'll have to check that out.

4. Which one do you prefer, Night of the Living Dead original or remake? I like the remake, it's more believable but don't get me wrong the original is a classic.

The original... because it's the original... but the remake is AWESOME. It's a much better remake than the Dawn remake and I LIKE the Dawn remake. I think Tom Savini did a GREAT job on that remake.

5. Did you hear that Land Of The Dead has been moved up to June? When or if you see it, will you write down what you thought of the movie?

I can't wait until I get to the letter that says it's been moved up to May. Heh. But yeah--June 28th! I can't wait! I will have seen it by the time this sees print. It's going to be awesome!

I hope nobody has asked you these questions before me, and if they did I'm sorry. (Hey--if they did--I already forgot answering them, so no worries) I hope you print my letter so I can be somewhat part of this walking dead world. So Mr.Kirkman and the whole crew involved keep up the fantastic job. I will always be here and loyal until the end, so signing off (feeling a little hungry)

Adam Carter

Your letter got printed, Adam! Congrats!

Robert,

There was a time, recently, that I bought nothing but Marvel Comics. If it wasn't Marvel, I didn't buy it.

The Walking Dead has changed all that. This comic is the very essence of awesome in its purest, most natural form. For creating it, I hail to you! HAIL ROBERT KIRKMAN!

That's great--now go out and buy Savage Dragon, Sin City, Hellboy, Noble Causes, Ultra, Ministry of Space, Wanted, The Intimates and the BILLIONS of other books that are just as good as anything Marvel has put out.

Anyway, on to business: If you were actually to put aliens in at around issue 75, or maybe killer robots, or something else like that, I will personally send you \$200 for being the best human ever to live. Anyone who wouldn't send you \$200 is probably a jerk. Buncha jerks.

Lewis Watts, Zombie lover for life

P.S.- Seriously. \$200.

\$200 for something I'm going to do anyway--SOLD! You're not a very bright man Lewis Watts... and I love you for it!

Mr. Kirkman,

First let me tell you that I have been watching

zombie movies since I was about 6 *lets just say I had a messed up child hood*, and when I came across your book at issue №4 I was excited, I could tell from the cover that this was going to be good. Since then I have been buying your books left and right, the guys at my local comic shop know me when I walk in and they immediately tell me if the new issue is in or not, the funny thing is I never started going to that shop until my friend told me of this comic. I think you got this down just right, the endings to each issue just amazes me so much, my favorite one is when Carl shoots Shane, I could hear that gun shoot and smell the burnt powder of the round. Your plots and writing are great and Adlard and Rathburn are some of the most talented artists I have ever seen.

Also I got a few questions,

1) first off I live in the metroplex in Texas and heard that you guys were here in Dallas a while ago! and I missed you guys, So I was wondering if you will be coming back to Dallas any time soon? If so when?

At the latest it will be next year when ZEUS COMICS throws CAPE! 2006. Not sure if I'll be there before that. You should have come to CAPE! this year... it was GREAT!

2) Second of all I been having a debate with my friend on what gun Rick is hold on the cover of issue №4 *I personally think it is a H&K USP 9mm* my friend thinks it is not any particular gun.

You're right, it's an H&K USP 9mm... Tony Moore knows his guns... because he, like Charlie Adlard... is a murderer.

3) And third and final, have you ever read this book called "The Complete Survival Guide of The Undead"? If not you should give it a shot the author writes it like Zombies actually have attacked the world before, and writes it with a serious tone. Well that is all I really looking for the "big surprise" for issue 25.

Sincerely,
Steven Ojeda

You mean the zombie survival guide? Could there REALLY be TWO books out there like that?

Robert

Well, sorry to say you got another first time letter writer here. Anyway I finally had to speak up about this series. I started picking this series up with issue one, and it's the best damn comic I've read in a long time. Seriously I place this up there with "Preacher" as my all time favorite comic book.

I always read it last when I pick up my stuff (which is actually a compliment since I always save the best one for last!) As a big fan of Romero's work I think you got it perfect. Except for Thomas being the killer, that was a little predictable. Oh by the way, I never EVER gave a shit about the similarities with 28 days later. It wasn't even really a zombie movie, and I never heard of this role-playing game everybody keeps mentioning. Of course being from a small town

in central PA. doesn't help. I totally sympathize with Rick deciding to hang Thomas being the father of three young girls, a nine year old and five year old twins respectfully, I would be tying the knot for him. Being shot was too good for him. Even after the beating! Well, just a few last thoughts for the road. Keep the art black & white. Fast zombies suck ass. and the second aliens start showing up I'll know you've run out of ideas and it's time to find a new favorite book.

Chris Lenkevich

Thanks for the kind words Chris.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Okay, so unlike the majority of people who read this book and write in to Letter Hacks (and judging by the amount of pages you consistently devote to their musings, that's a LOT of people!), I would not classify myself as a fan of the zombie-genre. Sure, I watched 28 Days Later and Shaun of the Dead was hands down the best film of last year (Hi Simon, if you're reading!), heck I've even had a soft spot for the Thriller video, back when that was the only time Michael Jackson was accused of going bump in the night, but when I read some of the letters sent in by obvious zombie-obsessives, I really do question whether I have a legitimate claim to be reading this book. Fortunately, there's one thing that everyone can appreciate, and that's a well-written comic, where characterization is pushed to the forefront.

Dude, you're worthy. I you need to read this book is three bucks--or a retailer who doesn't mind you standing at the rack for a while. There's not zombie fan elitism at work here. We all love one another equally.

After reading №18 I was interested to read that the characters themselves dictated the direction of the finished story. What a novel idea! And after re-reading the issue again, I was just wondering whether Mr. Moore's cover revealed your initial intentions for this issue before the characters' intervention?

It revealed SOME of the initial intentions. Rick WAS going to hang Thomas. There was a LOT more that got changed though.

Nice cliffhanger, too. Does this mean they're gonna be leaving the prison? It sure seems as though the group are moving to a different locale for each "arc": First the campsite, then the farm, then the prison. It's kinda like The Littlest Hobo...with zombies...and without a dog.

I am unfamiliar with this "Littlest Hobo" you speak of.

Nice work on the trades for this book too, by the way. I like the way they're released so that anyone that picks up the trade and likes what they read is able to then jump straight into the "monthly" book from where they left off. I got the first two trades, then №13 and haven't looked back, and I'm sure there'll be a stack of people who just got the first three trades and will be onboard for the single issues as of №19.

(Incidentally, I've also caught up with Invincible this way, getting the vol.1-4 trades and then picking up №19-21 plus the №0 issue, so now I can keep on with the single issues without missing a beat).

Oh, one last thing: thanks for the character pages this issue. To be honest, I was a little confused by who everyone was while reading the second trade, but after 18 issues I felt a lot more familiar with the characters, but it's a welcome addition with such a big cast. Will it be a semi-regular feature? Maybe run it at the end of each arc to update everyone's situation?

Anyway, I'm done. Keep up the good work, Kirko!

Paul Shinn

I shrank the character pages down from six pages to three so I'll probably print it in EVERY issue from now on--just to be on the safe side.

Hey guys, congrats on the Eisner noms,

Say what you want about readers turning on Rick, but honestly, I just don't like him anymore. Dan Haskell pretty much summed up my feelings on Rick's recent behavior in his letter in TWD №19 and the end of that chapter sealed the deal for me. Suddenly, I want Rick dead. He's messed up. Passing judgement on a killer who was already incarcerated for his crimes (not his fault a bunch of potential victims decided to move in with him - he's already in prison!), unilaterally creating the law of this new world and then breaking said law? And not just breaking it, but killing Dex in cold blood during the middle of a zombie skirmish? No two ways about it, I want Rick's back-shooting, two-faced, double-talking head on a pike, period.

Come now, it can't be all that bad. We're going somewhere with all this--don't worry.

Now having said that, I should also add that this story is amazing page after page and that just because I don't like Rick anymore doesn't mean I'm not enjoying the hell out of this title. If anything, the fact that I now hate Rick is one of the great things about this story. No one is sacred. If he died, I'd go right on reading this book, rooting for Tyreese, Lori, Glenn and everyone else and feeling a smug sense of satisfaction knowing Rick's pushing up daisies. In fact, if anything, it'd do well for the rest of the cast, give 'em a chance to shine. So feel free to ice the self-righteous bastard, won't bother me none and I guarantee I'll keep reading.

One other thing, Gary Timmons asked: "Any good convention horror stories?" and you answered: "Nah, nothing crazy's ever happened to me." and I thought "Oh, I don't know . . . I remember that time you got stabbed in the back by a creepy little killer fetus that lived in his twin brother's stomach." Sorry, I just had to chime in with a plug for HACK/SLASH: COMIC BOOK CARNAGE. After all, isn't it exactly what the lad asked for? A good horror story involving Robert Kirkman at a convention? I'm a huge TWD fan (and successful recruiter of new readers, as well) but I thought I'd take the time to show my buddy Tim Seeley some love (he

says he needs it). If you like slashers, zombie cats, zombie bimbos, Evil Ernie or would just love to see Robert Kirkman take a dirt nap, pick up HACK/SLASH!

Oh, yeah... I that book totally slipped my mind when it was coming out--I should have plugged it way more. I'm getting very forgetful in my old age. Tim Seeley is a great guy and Hack/Slash is a very entertaining book. If ANYONE could make me enjoy a comic with Evil Ernie in it--it's Tim... but I make no promises on THAT issue. I'm sure it'll be as good as all the rest though.

My Wednesday started out like any other Wednesday. I go to my favorite comic book shop, here in Montreal, QC Canada, and for like the 19th time I see an issue of the Walking Dead, something I've been wanted to check out but haven't (collecting 15+ books a month is a hefty list for a college student) Then I see 3 TPB's sitting on a shelf, I ask my good friend and store manager, what he thinks. He tells me he's getting a lot of great feedback, so I buy the first volume and go to a coffee place near by to read.

I run back to my comic book store after reading it, and buy volume 2 and 3 as well as issue number 19.

HAH! We got you!!!

They were amazing, I couldn't put them down. I am a zombie fan and a comic book fan. To have a zombie book out there that does the genre justice, is more than just satisfying, it's fucking fantastic.

Everything about the books were great, and true to the zombie genre. The writing is excellent and the art is moving, realistic and just flat out suits the book perfectly.

I just finished number 19 and I am extremely pleased with the series and will continue to read it for as long as you guys keep it going (or up until the zombies start talking, talking zombies are just not cool)

Got it--no talking zombies.

Sincerely,
Jon Maggio

P.S. Congrats to everyone nominated for the Eisner

Thanks so very much, I'm VERY pleased to be--oh wait--oh yeah--I'm sure Charlie Adlard and Tony Moore are very excited.

That's all she wrote folks. I'm spent (after all the beef dip jokes) so I've really got nothing to say here... other than be here next month for big events in issue 21 and check out Invincible and Marvel Team-Up if you haven't already.

Oh, and I'll be at the San Diego Comic-Con, Wizard World Chicago, and the Baltimore Comic-Con this year--so look me up, I promise to shake your hand and smile. I'll probably even give the thumbs up way too many times.

See you next month. Same bat time--same bat channel.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

I never realized how haunting a THUNK!! sound effect could be, let alone six of them. Amanda here, and for an issue that doesn't involve anyone's death, how come I still feel so tense? Must be something in the air. Michonne's arrival earlier this arc was new for Rick and co., and for readers, so let's get into these old Letter Hacks and see what you all thought back in the summer of '05.

Well, check that out, issue #21. And not a day late-well, that's actually a true statement, we're not a day late... slightly more actually, but only slightly. Our scheduling problems as of late are due in part to a busy con season, but also... well, they're my fault. I've been taking a little bit more time on scripts than I should have and because of that, Charlie's been having trouble keeping up. So there, my fault. Sorry about that.

But don't worry, we'll get this thing back on track before you know it. I'm completely dedicated to this book. As much if not more so than I've ever been.

I do have to mention that one hiccup in what will soon be a two-year run ain't bad. So cut us some slack as we get things back on schedule. We'll love you for it.

*In other news, that big hardcover I mentioned as shipping in November has been pushed back to December, but it'll be shipping in **EARLY** December so it's practically the same time. It'll be worth the wait though, just you wait and see.*

Now, let's answer some of that mail you kids seem to like so much.

Hello Robert

When I first saw the cover for issue №19, I didn't know what to think. For a second I thought you were going to bring in super heroes, UFOs and sexy ninja woman for some reason.

But when I read the book my fears were laid to rest. Damn fine stuff as always. I have to admit I love how Rick is evolving as a character. Way backing issue №1 we saw him get a tear in his eye just for shooting a zombie.

But here, he blows Dexter away with a "Cry me

a river." Rick has definitely changed over time. But is this a good or bad thing? Is he going to become a stronger leader? Or is he going over to the dark side so to speak where he pops anyone who stands against him?

Time will tell I guess. Great work. Glad to hear sales are still going up. I want this book around for a long time.

Peace,
Eric L. Busby

This book should be around for a good long time, so no worries there at the moment. Keep an eye on Rick, I think you'll be surprised where he's headed.

Hello again.

First a big thank you for printing my first letter in issue 18.

This new chick in TWD 19 kicks ass it would be a shame if she got killed too soon. It seems to be a growing trend, you introduce several characters, put focus on one and the rest are fodder but it is handled with genius.

The zombies are looking more gruesome, when Rick first woke and journeyed to Atlanta the zombies he encountered were freshly dead now they're uglier. A few years later with all the weather like snow, rain, heat, wind, they'd be naked and completely gross.

We'll get there, eventually.

I know you stated this series is zombie movie with the bits before and after the bit we see but every single issue is brilliant, if there were a TV show it would work better in a format like 24, maybe showing a hour of every day for a whole month, show what the characters are doing.

Dan

A TV show? That's a brilliant idea.

Kirkman and co:

This. Book. Kicks. ASS!!

Most books that my local comic store (Dragon's Tale in Neptune Beach!) tends to recommend are super-hero centric. So I was a bit suprised by all these things I was hearing about a freaking zombie book. Now I've always loved zombie movies, but I'd never read a comic about the fuckers that grabbed my interest. Until TWD, that is. I was content to flip through an issue here or there at the beginning, but I was too busy buying the same old crap from Marvel and DC that I had been reading for years. Anyways, you know the story. I wised up, dropped a bunch of dead-weight books, and dove head-first into TWD, beginning with the first two trades, and then the single issues.

It's good to have you.

Now that all of that is out of the way, I have one thing to say about you, Robert. YOU'RE A SICK BASTARD! I thought for sure the only characters that were safe in this book were Carl, Sophia, and Herschel's twins. Shows what I know.

OK, so if even little kids are expendable, I ask you this: is there ANYONE in this book that you consider "safe"? Even if you don't want to say who it is, I'm just curious. I'd go with Herschel. After all, how much horrifying shit can happen to one guy?

Well, nobody is safe. There are times where a character like Hershel might get a pass based on all this shit I've already put him through but that's it. There are no characters I've sat down and said "I'm never killing that guy" about. Now I DO have long running plans for a few characters so they're safe for a while--but I've already changed my mind on a couple long running characters already--like Donna.

Here's hoping this book continues for over 100 issues, or at least ends with an issue of two pages of people dying and twenty pages of zombies standing around. Or aliens!

Keep it up, you sick, sick man.
Chris Carroll

Man, when we get to the last issue (however long that takes) I'm TOTALLY doing that death on pages 1 and 2 and 20 pages of zombies thing. That's so totally awesome. Don't worry, none of you will be reading the book then. We'll be two years past aliens by that point.

Dear Kirkman,

After the events of issue 18, I didn't know how you were going to write your way out of that situation. But you pulled it off with the age-old method of throwing zombies at the problem.

See, you guys are starting to catch onto the formula.

The first draft of this letter was all about Land of the Dead, which should be out by the time this letter is printed. (*That's pretty presumptuous isn't it--who says I'm going to print this letter?*) Needless to say, damn it'll be great. This should be another good year for zombie flicks (aside from Romero's masterpiece). Movies like Risen, Undead, House of the Dead 2, Silent Hill (are there zombies in that?), The Day of the Living Dead: The Curse of the Maya (ok, maybe not that one...), Return of the Living Dead IV and V (err...), Worst Case Scenario (is this out?), and Zombies (but Hooper's movie may be out next year).

I like the idea of the mysterious woman's zombie guards. Our group should employ some. Maybe form a little contingent of zombies, like the whole Manchurian incident in 1942. Seriously, Max Brooks is brilliant.

Maybe I SHOULD read that book...

1. Will we be seeing the zombies "getting smarter" soon?

Nope.

2. I asked this in Invincible, but could you fantasy cast your ideal TWD movie? Come on, Simon Pegg as Rick!

You think he could play Rick? Really? He's a fantastic actor... but Rick? I mean, Nick Frost MAYBE but not Simon. ;-)

3. Can we see more of Sleepwalker!? Please! (ok sorry, wrong book, but I've already been printed there once...)

THROK!,
Chris Pitts

Sleepwalker is in Team-Up 9 and 10 and will be returning for the "LEAGUE OF LOSERS" story arc that will be running from issues 15-18. You're in LUCK! I love that guy!

Dear Letter hacks (the best letters page...ever),

I've been following this book and Mr. Kirkman sense I read the 2009 relaunch - I have gone back and bought the wholes set - This is the only non-Marvel book I get

WOW--really? The 2009 books are what got you into my work? REALLY?! Heh. That's pretty cool. Welcome aboard. You should try INVINCIBLE, though--if you like the Marvel stuff.

I've just read issue 19 - I must admit I was weary of the cover - a woman with 2 zombies in tow makes sense in the walking dead universe - but just looks a bit too "out there". Anyway after reading this looks to be a great arc - I thought they would have to move on from the prison but no Rick killed Dex - This was a big surprise for me. As for the ending - yeah its about time the "You kill you die" was addressed. I mean Tyreese killed his daughters boyfriend, nothing was said will this be detailed later?

Well, yeah. Of course.

Anyway time for my fave zombie movies:

- 1 - Dawn of the dead original
- 2 - Night of the living dead original
- 3 - Dead alive/Breaddead - the energy of the film is insane

Ok now I have a couple of questions:

1 - what do you think would happen if this happened in the Marvel universe? Personally I believe there wouldn't be many heroes left. Who would you pick as survivors? I'd have to pick Punisher (for his survival instinct) and Cage (unbreakable skin). Who would you think would be left?

I've been thinking about this a lot lately, actually...

2 - I hope you never get bored with this book - I could see this becoming Rick's son's book once Rick passes on.

You think Carl's really going to live that long?

3 - If Romero was to offer to make a movie/TV show of TWD would you be interested?

Why? You got his number?

4 - Would you ever let anyone else write this book?

No.

Anyway I've taken a ton of your time. I hope to god you print this. Thanks for the great books.

Craig "Buhbuhrayspidey" Lowrey

Thanks to that "GOD" guy... I'm printing your letter. Make sure you thank him.

Hi Robert, Charlie, Cliff & Tony

Just thought you (& other George A. Romero/ Simon Pegg fans) might be interested to know , that George A. Romero was so impressed by "Shaun of the Dead" (according to my daily

paper), that he gave Simon Pegg & Edgar Wright (his mate in both Spaced & Shaun) cameos in "Land of the Dead". Neat, huh?!

You didn't disappoint with the women with sword & 2 chained zombies episode BTW - very good, though I thought she might have been loathe to give up her weapon so quickly.

Dude, she just wanted into the safe place. There's not much she wouldn't have done.

Anyway, can't wait for the next issue (& even more so for №25!). The great thing about The Walking Dead being occasionally late is the surprise I get when the comic shop lady, Debbie hands me the latest copy when I walk through the door. My other fave title (apart from the Bendis/ Maleev run on DD) is "Stranghaven" which comes out twice a year if you're lucky, but usually just once! Well worth waiting for as is TWD.

That's one way of looking at it.

And before I go, I got a little stack of back issues today through the post of DH Zombie World. Haven't read them yet...you heard of these?

Take care & just keep on doing what you do best!

Jeff

Heard of Zombie World? I wrote the introduction to the new Trade Paperback coming from Dark Horse.

Letter Hacks,

First off, let me congradulate Charlie Adlard and Tony Moore on their Eisner nominations.

Second, let me congradulate Robert Kirkman for making "the must list" in issue 826/827 of Entertainment Weekly (page 74). I love their magazine and think that you really deserve the honor.

I am still digging the book. I still can't wait to get the next issues. Still love the characters, covers (a poster of issue 18 would be framed and hung in the house), art and basically the whole damn thing!

You mentioned in the letters column that us fuckers better like the letters columns. I assure you, I love the letters column and I know that a friend of mine 3 states away does too. Whenever we talk, we end up talking about TWD.

I really liked issue 19. When 18 had finished I was kind of shocked that Dexter was kicking everyone out. I recall in one of the letter hacks (around the mid-teens) you saying that the

prison was going to be around for a while. Now that I have finished 19, it doesn't look like they are going anywhere anytime soon.

Yeah, I should keep a closer eye on my comments here so that I can make sure I don't spoil any future cliffhangers from now on.

I honestly want to see them in the prison for a bit longer. I've read some of the readers want them on the run and in danger the whole time. That is always good entertainment, but I have always liked the challenge characters face when trying to rebuild their lives after a catastrophe. I still say that this is why the original Dawn of the Dead was better than the remake. They tried to "live" in the Mall even with a baby on the way. They tried to create a sense of normality knowing the hordes of zombies are out there. In the remake, it was like they were just waiting it out. I think there is a lot more you can do IN the prison with your characters, than you can on the run.

I agree.

I like how you encourage your readers to write in with questions and the fact that you answer them. I know there must be a lot that you just can't fit into the book, but you filling us in with what we ask about is the biggest reason I read the letter hacks. A lot of people have had some good questions that I didn't even bother to think about, you answer them, I go back and read your books again (usually for the 3rd time). So, of course, I have a few more questions for you:

1) How in the hell did Andrew manage to find his way into A block if it was locked down? (or was that what Dexter wanted everyone to think, but it was just crawling with zombies)

The prison is more or less completely unlocked now that the electricity is out. Also, the guards last act before they abandoned the place was to set the prisoners free to they could fend for themselves and after that they left the place more or less unlocked.

2) After Andrew managed to get into A block, how did he get past all the Zombies to get the guns and get back out alive?

Dexter was with him, and he knew the area pretty well. Luck was on their side as well.

3) Most importantly, why in the hell didn't Andrew (I'm seeing a pattern here) tell Dexter about all the zombies? Dexter seemed quite suprised to see them (or did Andrew mess up, and forget to lock up behind him?)

A-Block is a pretty big place. Roamers only roam if they have something to roam to. Dexter and Andrew could have traveled to the armory in

A-Block when all the zombies were spread out inside. They could have only encountered one or two zombies on the way there and on the way out. But all the zombies in the place would have heard them and would have started moving toward them, to the door that Andrew left open. Why he left the door open is still up for debate, and may even be revealed somewhere don't the line... I mean, I had to keep Andrew alive for a reason right?

4) If Andrew was cunning enough to get in, get some guns and get out, does this mean we are going to see him again? He could really become quite a pain to the survivors if he wants revenge on Rick for taking his home and killing his lover.

All will be revealed (hey, I gotta get something from Bendis for putting my number on NEWSARAMA.)

(Questions done.)

I really like the addition of the female character in 19. We have referred to her as the zombie tamer, but I'm sure you will give her a name. I think the possibilities with this character are endless. She's another woman. She's been out in the world and survived. She could make things better or make them worse. Only you know and I'm sure you won't let us down.

You also mentioned "Hershel is very religious. You'll be hearing more from him on the subject as time goes on." Thanks! Hershel is one of my favorite characters and its nice to know that you have plans, other than zombie food, for him.

See, that's what I mean... I never should have said that. Forget I said that. Hershel could die at any moment. I swear.

I am SO glad to hear the book is on solid ground.

Keep up the good work (even if it comes out late)

Mike Gineman
Wauseon, OH

P.S., I told myself that I wouldn't write in to a comic book again, but your book is just THAT good. Damn you for making me embrace my geek-hood.

Welcome to the dark side, GEEK!

Kirkman,

Well yeah this is my first letter to a comic and all that and the book is really great and all sorts of compliments you've heard a million times before. My main reason for writing is to be an annoying fan and point out that those two

armless zombies that got their heads cut off in issue 19 by that new character mysteriously grew arms when they were laying dead on the ground. Now maybe there is something in the zombie mythology that I missed that explained this but I do not know (if zombies started immediately regenerating that would just make things crazy). It just struck me as odd to see something like that get through without someone saying "Hey those zombies don't have arms!". Maybe 20 years from now when the whole alien arc is through you can go back and do special editions adding in animated side kicks and removing extra appendages. Oh and while I am here let me compose a list of questions.

You didn't know cutting the head off a zombie made them grow arms? How do you think all those four armed corpses keep popping up? Read the handbook, silly.

1) Pretty early on the characters started referring to the zombies as zombies. They just automatically knew what they were. Does this mean that they live in a world that contains Romero films and fiction zombie stories previous to the incident? It didn't seem like they had to come up with the word on their own.

Well that is really the only question I have but I felt like making a list none the less. Everything about the book is great. Thanks.

Dustin Sims

The term "zombie" existed long before Romero's movies. I think of this book taking place in our world. Only their October 2003 went a little different than ours (that's when I picture this book starting). So with that in mind... all our movies would have existed for them. I doubt anyone in the book so far is a Romero fan. I mean, they certainly haven't MENTIONED anything.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I just finished reading Walking Dead №19. A truly great issue!!! I really dug the cover to this one. Before reading it I as thinking: Wow! Who is this bad-ass chick with the sword? I really like Tony Moore's art, but I'm in no way complaining about Charlie Adlard's, just try to keep Tony on the covers as long as you can. They're truly cool! And also, applause to you for creating such a great story. This book is excellent and the writing is great, not just an awesome zombie story, but a story that I think people who aren't especially into zombie stuff could enjoy, too, if they'd give it the chance. Bottom line: This story is great!!! It's really turning into the "zombie movie that never ends" vision that you mentioned in the introduction of the first trade. Again, kudos to

YOU, Mr. Moore, Mr. Adlard, Mr. Rathburn, and anyone else who has ever influenced or had a hand in this great tale that's got us all begging for more at the end of each issue.

And now the questions:

1. In the above-mentioned introduction to the first trade (and forgive me if you've already addressed this) you said that you wanted this book "to be a chronicle of years of Rick's life". Is this still the case? You mentioned that no character is safe and I just wondered if this pertained to Rick as well. Is this truly Rick's story? Maybe (FAR in the future, hopefully) you'll end the series with Rick getting killed. Maybe he'll be offed in issue №20. Who knows? Just thought I'd ask...

So far, yes--this is RICK'S story. But I'm not opposed to killing him if the opportunity to tell better stories as a result presented itself. Trust me when I say NOBODY is safe.

2.Why did Tyrese tell Rick that he should rethink his no killing stance? Is he planning something? Did he already do something that would prompt him to say this?

Well, Tyreese himself had killed Chris not too long ago and he just witnessed Rick killing Dexter. I think Tyreese meant neither of them were following it so Rick should probably rethink it.

3. Why did Rick ask the chick with the sword (We haven't found her name out have we?) to give up all of her weapons? Will this be a standard practice for any newcomers to the prison? I guess she'd have to prove herself trustworthy in order to regain her weapons, but when and if she does, GIVE HER THAT SWORD BACK!!! She was awesome with it, man!!!!

The group will be very cautious around all newcomers after the things they went through with the prisoners. It's something Lori has been nagging about since Tyreese showed up. It just took Rick a while to catch on.

4. Is that Lori who's "alone" on the sneak peek of the cover of issue №20? Oh well, I guess by the time you print this, I'll already know... Maybe Rick DOES die in issue №20! Hmmm.

Maybe.

Well, I guess that's all the questions I can think of off the top of my head for now. Hey, put my vote in with all those who have requested a poster. That would really be cool. And keep up the good work all of you guys! This is a damn fine book!!!

Lloyd Duvall, Jr.

At this point I think it's only a matter of time until we get the poster.

Hi,

Never written before, just been a voyeur up to now, but I've been thinking; how much do the opinions of those who have read your work matter to you?

More than they should, I think. I really do care if you guys like this stuff. I'm doing it for ME, but I'm also doing it for YOU.

You obviously have a passion for the work that you do, and you've had to struggle to get your work recognized and published. Is the satisfaction for you in just getting the work out there, or is it the feedback that you get from people, good, bad and indifferent?

A little of both, actually. I think I'm prolific because I get a great deal of satisfaction just from getting the work out there. But I wouldn't be able to continue to do that if you kids didn't like the stuff. So the feedback is important too. As long as you realize that only 10% or less of the people reading this stuff are actually responding with feedback. At the end of the day, sales are the only feedback.

Now I'm guessing, but I would have thought that you would assume a kind of musician's view- that you make stuff you like and hope others like it too, or you would cry yourself to sleep at night from the adrenalin-fuelled-double-Y-chromosome rants that you must receive. But what about those who buy and never read?

What started this line of thought was that I recently got chatting to a guy I've never met before and it came up that we both liked comics (which is nice because it's fairly unusual to find round here these days). But as we talked it came out that while we bought similar comics, I buy them to read and he buys them, bags them and either adds them to his collection or sells them on at a profit without ever reading them.

EEK!

I couldn't quite get my head round the idea that he buys some very thought-provoking or at least damn good stories and then never turns a page, never gets beyond the front cover. I mean as a hobby it's fine, it's no different than say- collecting vintage bottles of wine and not drinking them. But I couldn't get the creators out of my head (please leave by the way- I need sleep without the zombie monkey dreams), the writer and artist put a lot of themselves and a lot of passion into the story only for it never

to be read but sit behind a CGC approved DNA-proof force field or whatever. I realize (or at least hope) that practices like this are fairly rare but there must still be quite a few people who do this, who collect for the sake of collecting. Indeed when I said that my spare room is nearly full to bursting with comics, the guy couldn't understand why I wouldn't sell them all, "I read them" didn't quite cut it. I just got a response filled with price estimates and CGC gradings. Even comics I don't read or like very much any more I pull out and give to my nephews (hi Joe, Bill & Fred!) so they can get the pleasure out of reading them as I did when I was their age.

So, does that bother you as a writer, never to have your work read, or are you pleased with it, regardless of who reads it (or not)?

Just a thought.
Dale Phillips

If the question is: would I continue to do the book if I knew that NO ONE was reading it and they were just bagging it and storing it of a later sale? Yeah, I think I would. I mean, I certainly don't like to hear that people aren't reading my work or looking at Charlie and Cliff's work, but I do the work because I like doing it, and it happens to pay the bills.

I would probably enjoy it less if I thought the majority of the people weren't even reading it, but really, it's no different than an art patron. I mean, it's someone paying you to make the art you would enjoy doing anyway, right?

Luckily, I think most people read these things so this is kind of a moot point.

Letter Hacks

It's gonna be hard to write a letter without sounding like a complete kiss-ass, but here goes...

Well, I've just put down issue 19 of TWD and I gotta say... damn fine work once again guys. This issue just doesn't let up.

I'm liking the new character introduced in this issue. By the time this goes to print, no doubt she's been fleshed out (and from what I've seen from Tony's future covers in Previews, gets involved in a BIG way) and I'm looking forward to reading that, but for now, hot damn she kicked all angles of zombie ass in this issue. Nice! The fact that Rick popped Dexter in the noodle amidst the chaos was a nice touch too. Sure, it was to save the group as a whole, but it should be interesting seeing how Rick adapts to such harsh actions

(Charlie's last panel spoke a thousand words if you ask me - such is the power of his art).

Heh, I bought that page... what a GREAT image that was.

Being a lifelong fan of comics, I've floated from title to title like a funnybook vampire waiting for the next gem to leech off. I think the last title I followed so religiously was Augustyn and Ramos's Crimson, and that bad boy finished a loooong time ago. Then, after many months of reading a few titles that started strong but ultimately began to fall, I read some of the buzz for the Walking Dead. It just sounded like the kind of book I would enjoy. So I joined the club with Issue 7 and a shiny new first TPB.

Boy was I blown away.

And since then, I think the Walking Dead is the only comic I religiously look forward to in that nice bundle that I order online. In a sea of zombies ideas/stories/games/films... this book sails over all of them. Don't get me wrong... like many other folks, I love a nice slice of zombie action (why are so many people attracted to working with walking corpses? cant be the smell) when its done right - its just a shame that its done right on so few an occasion. I think its the character work that I love the most. Even if the character is despicable, their demise will have an impact. That sort of thing doesn't usually happen in comics. There's none of the 'Bang. you're dead. oh well, never mind' thought process's that normally happen. So thumbs up to (the self-confessed shut in) you yourself Kirkman. This is an ongoing piece of class.

Just because I spend most of my time at home... doesn't mean I'm a shut in. My house is just really cool. I've got everything I need right now. Oh, and it's frigging summer time, it's HOT outside... why would I want to go out in the heat?

Art wise - I don't think there's a better combination than the Moore/Adlard/Rathburn connection. Sure, I was one of those that, at a first glance at issue 7 said 'oh... the art has changed', but Adlard is fast becoming a force of nature when it comes to this book, colour me happy on that one! Speaking of colour, I don't think enough things are said about Cliff Rathburn's gray tones, and for a guy who brandishes a mean pencil in his own right, he sure knows how to splash the tones for maximum impact (Oh, and if anyone's reading this, be sure to pick up Rathburns 'Reaper' trade if you can. It's a quality piece of work).

Yés, the ART at least in Reaper is second to none.

Speaking of quality pieces of work, you may be pleased to know that reading this led me down a path to purchase two of your Brit trades and a few Invincible issues. Great stuff, and I recommend it all to my fellow comic book reading buddies regularly. But then again, I'm from the mindset that anyone who writes a book called Battle Pope can do no wrong anyway LOL.

Anyway, back to the shuffling dead...

Another thing I like about this book is the unexpected element of it all. I've never known a book to surprise me at least once from issue to issue (and its refreshing to see someone actually back up the 'no-one is safe' talk with some surprising and horrific deaths - kudos to Mr. Kirkman). This certainly is one book that no one can predict - and I think that's part of why it just keeps on growing like it has (and rightfully so, the day I hear this book has been cancelled, I think I'll eat my own face - and does anybody want that on their conscience?! Thought not).

Overall, consider me a lifelong Walking Dead reader (not literally of course, though after a heavy night out, I sometimes resemble one of your decaying ghouls the next morning).

I'm not going to be another of those dudes who asks if Rick's going to go back to find more survivors, or to give you my five cents on where I think the story should go. You know what you're doing, and for all intents and purposes, you guys can drive this wagon all the way over a cliff and back again if that's how you feel. This is one reader who is just happy to be along for the ride.

Until the dead start walking in my neighbourhood and I'm forced to fight them off with a shovel... Keep up the good work guys!

Vince Hunt, UK

p.s: I'm sure I got some shit on my lips from all that ass kissing, but f**k it, this is the first of no doubt a few letters ill send to the funkotron collective, so its best to get it out the way in one hit.

We enjoy a good ass kissing from time to time. So no harm done.

And that'll do it for this month. Man, it seems like these things are getting LONGER.

Thanks for reading folks. I'll see you all back here next month.

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome back, readers, and what a simmering pot this issue is! Amanda here, trying not to wince at the blow between Rick and Tyreese on that final page. It was only a matter of time before something boiled over, as Rick put it, "everyone is teetering on the edge!" And as we teeter on the edge until next issue, here's some classic letters to hold you over.

Issue 22, here she is, isn't she grand?

If any of you folks live in Tacoma, Washington and you know where Comic Book Ink is (or have a phone book and know how to get to mapquest.com) come on out to my signing on October 22nd. You can find out more information by visiting www.comicbookink.com I'm sure there's a phone number on there somewhere if you've got some questions. Come on out!

Other than that, not really much to report this month. So I guess I'll just dive right into the letters. Sound good? Good.

Dear Kirkman,

I wrote you a letter in another book about writers not relying too much on pictures to tell the story. Issue 20 had four pages with no words other than "HUMNGH," "GUH," "RUH," and "Wow." Yet, those pages were my favorite in the book. Oh, except Allen getting bit (finally!). Page №2 also established that even "dead" zombies can still be dangerous!

Did you guys realize that was Thomas' remains? I thought not.

Some questions and stuff:

1. Ok, so in the Extended Cut of Dawn of the Dead we discover that Peter had a brother that was a pro football player. So...?

Really? Hmmmmmm.

2. In Zombie King №0, we learn that zombies have other urges. Will we see any cows in TWD?

No. Not any time soon.

3. How much did Land of the Dead kick ass?

A fair bit.

4. Did you forget to look for Simon Pegg too?

No, I knew where he was and I knew where to look. So I didn't miss it. Pretty cool stuff actually.

5. Really, no smart zombies?

Nah. Sorry.

Man, zombie books everywhere. Zombie King, Dead World, Shaun of the Dead, Zombie Tales, Dead Eyes Open, Living with Zombies, and others. Keep up the good work. I wish I had more to say about each issue, but they're just so solid. Oh, thanks for biting Allen. I've been wanting him gone since before Donna. After that, I was hoping Zombie Donna would get 'em. So thanks. Here's to someone eating Otis!

Later,
Chris Pitts

Man, you really didn't like Allen? Well, I'm sorry to say that I wouldn't count him out just yet.

Listen Kirkman,

Enough with the prison already lets get these people moving. Don't get me wrong I love The Walking Dead but lets see some more zombie action! By the way, are you gonna put a №0 issue just like you did with Invincible?

Danny Ardeljan

No plans for a #0 issue just yet but you never know. Now, as far as the prison goes... just keep reading. There's plenty more zombie action coming up.

Here it is Wednesday (okay it's Friday), and I have read all of today's comics. Now when I finished the issue №20's contents, I was not surprised to find a recurring theme in the letters column. All these readers are saving their favorite titles to read last in their weekly stacks of comics, like it's some way to delay the satisfaction of a good lay with an array of titles to serve as a bit of foreplay before the Walking Dead. I thought, "how pathetic," then I realized that I had saved my copy of the Walking Dead until last... (that's almost as pathetic as all those people whining about Hawkeye in Bendis's letter column.)

No, it's not even close. Although, I gotta admit, I read my favorite comics FIRST and then I usually

end up with a bunch of books I eventually end up forgetting to read.

Anyway, I just wanted to let you know that upon reading the first three trades of the Walking Dead, borrowing them from a friend, I have resolved myself to catch up with this zombie epic, even though I don't consider myself a zombie fanatic. Actually, I am not surprised but am thrilled to hear of the impending Walking Dead hardback...(hope there is a Charlie sketch included in each, maybe some of your scripts) But since I am not a zombie enthusiast, I wondered why I like this series so much. I collect 20 titles or so a month and one thing is recurrent...it is just the same as taking a step back and looking at the variety of titles that I collect. Powers, Daredevil, Runaways, Walking Dead, Young Avengers, Astonishing X-Men... a variety of things going on in each title. I just think that the world of superheroes needed a black, white, and gray Zombie-Human-Survivist-Horror-Epic to stir things up a bit. Just like Image did way back when they started and continue to do today. The variety and events that have impacts on future events is what keeps things going...I mean when one letter column starts referencing another in the comic book industry, we've hit something. Call it a high, call it a low...who knows? But the variety is what keeps my creative vision going and my ambition as a comic fan alive. If you killed Rick (which I don't see happening) things would go on. Tyreese is just as worthy to be the center of the book, as is any number of the other characters. That is the beauty of this book. Take them where you will...we will follow like the mindless hoard you command in the book.

Daniel Guy

P.S. Any chance that Bendis can convince you to take over Daredevil when he leaves? Maybe that suggestion I gave him that he should blackmail you into doing it will work. Think about it.

Bendis was going to hand me the baton, but I was off in the bathroom. It went to Brubaker by default... because he was on the panel with Brian. Sucks to be me.

Hey guys,

First off, want to do the usual congrats for making a great fuckin' book. I must admit I was very sad to see Tony go as the main artist, as his artwork was one of the main reasons I got into this, but Charlie and Cliff are still keeping me happy. Just finished issue 20 and it's still going strong. But on to business, a friend and I found a small continuity error in issue 19. (I guess slight spoilers ahead if you haven't read 19) In it we are introduced to Michonne, the samurai sword carrying badass, and her two lovely dates (both zombies). As a condition to being let into the prison, she has to kill both of her zombie friends, which she does in a single chop. Now on the cover and frames previous they are

shown without lower jaws and arms. After they are decapitated and on the ground, THEY HAVE ARMS AGAIN! This is shown in two frames. Not a very big deal, but it makes me feel smart to point out the only mistake in like 20 issues, so back off. But anyways, love the comic, keep up the good work, and welcome to the fun Rus.

Nick Drierer

Zombies grow arms when you cut their heads off. How do you think we get four-armed zombies? Stupid.

Hey Walking Dead crew,

Man do I love this comic. After every new issue, I'm yearning for the next. There are so many directions and possibilities you can use. Its only on issue 21 and it feels like its just at the beginning. Please at least take it to 300 issues. On to some questions:

Any chance of an issue 0 like you did with Invincible. I'd really like to see the beginning of the infestation, maybe something about Atlanta. You should really get Tony Moore to come back for it. What's he been up to? That Fear Agent looks kind of cool.

Well, you kinda already answered your question, part of it at least. Tony's been off working on Fear Agent. There are no plans at this point to do a zero issue but you never know when plans can change.

I know people keep asking about a live action Walking Dead movie or tv show. It definitely should be an HBO original series. I'm going to try to write to someone at HBO and get some other fans to do the same. (So get to it people) I would live to see it in black and white. Nothing is scarier than black blood pouring out of the body. If the chance comes up to do so, do not let them change a thing. I'd rather not see it if you don't have creative control. Its perfect the way it is. No new characters, no getting rid of characters, no plot changes. TWD has more drama and emotion than anything on TV.

If The Walking Dead gets transferred to any other medium, TV or film... there are going to be changes. There would have to be. Don't forget, the possibility is there for changes to make it BETTER.

Any chance you and the Funkotron crew will come to Wizard World Boston?

Thanks for a great comic
Billy McEnery

No plans to be at Boston. Sorry.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

I'm about to write something you have probably

never read before, especially concerning "The Walking Dead." (Yes, I've wrote to comics before, I wrote to Marvel's "Transformers" twice and "X-Men" twice, all four letters never got published, though)

I HATE horror movies. Hate them. I have a very weak stomach, so all that blood and gore just sickens me. I try to tell myself that is not real but it doesn't make any difference. I still get nauseated when I watch them. If I am interested in a movie, I have to wait for it to come to Sci-Fi Network so that I can watch the edited movie, and even then there are still some scenes that sicken me. My problem with zombie movies has been what you summed up in your prologue, that I'm always asking "What happened to..." after the movie. To me, it wasn't worth all the gore to just be left wondering why at the end of the movie.

Sissy.

Then I heard about your comic. The first ever mention of it was in the first letter page of "Marvel Team-Up" when everyone was saying how wonderful issue one was (which it was, by the way) and how "The Walking Dead" was their favorite comic. That was high praise coming from such accomplished writers. Then I saw some places online that kept talking about how this was a great book and should be everyone's "Must Read" list. Even with all this praise, I was still skeptical. I mean, I HATE horror movies, how could I enjoy a "Horror Comic?" So I finally decided what the hell and picked up the first trade.

I couldn't put it down. I reread it three times. I was just fascinated by how the book focused on character development, not zombie mayhem. I immediately went out and picked up the second trade and pre-ordered the third. Luckily, one of my local comic shops happened to have issues 13-16 (the current issue at the time), so I picked them up and have since added "The Walking Dead" to my pull list. This comic is the best comic on the market right now, and I'm glad I'm finally on board to read it each and every month.

Okay, I take back the "sissy" remark.

I just finished issue 20 and I'm amazed how the story just keeps me guessing every month. Just when I think that I know what is coming, you throw me a curve instead of that fastball and just leave me dumbfounded at the plate. Enough with the cliffhangers, okay? Don't you think you have tortured us poor readers (not to mention your poor characters) enough? As 20 draws to a close we have Allen being bitten and Tyreese and Dale finding a generator. Will Allen survive? Will the generator work? Tune in next month, same Bat Time, same Bat Channel.

I have a few questions/suggestions:

1. I've been thinking about Chris Pitts statement that Tyreese was bitten and have come to the

conclusion that he wasn't. I would think that since he's been back, Carol and he have had sex. As panicky as she seems, I would think that if anything about him was different she would have drawn attention to it. Besides, when he returned in issue 17 he had his shirt off and there were no bite marks.

2. I think Allen will survive. His bite seems bad, but not life threatening. Amy had her neck bitten, Donna had her face bitten off, and Hershel's kids all had their necks bitten. Jim's bite was not life threatening, however, it was a huge chunk of skin taken off. I think that Jim's wound could have been treated and he died (if he died) of bacterial infection due to exposure. I think that Allen will want to die, but he won't. The group will find some antibiotics at the prison, treat his wound with them, and he will survive, which will make him more depressed (He has had a death wish since Donna's death).

3. I have come to the conclusion that you are a Minnesota Vikings fan. You see, in the early 90's they made a trade with the Dallas Cowboys where they got Hershel Walker and the Cowboys got the draft pick that they used to draft Emmitt Smith. Either that, or a guy named Hershel used to beat the shit out of you at school. Why esle would you create a character named Hershel just to torture him so? I mean, the man's family (except for two kids) have been wiped out in the most horrific ways. I'm pretty sure his last son will be killed soon and Maggie is going to get pregnant by Glenn, just to torture him more and make you feel better.

I only know one guy named Hershel, and he's a nice guy. Hershel in the book is just an unlucky dude... to say the LEAST.

4. You have hinted that contact with either the military or government is coming soon. I'm hoping when this happens, they will have an explanation for what caused this plague. I know that you have stated that you think by revealing what caused people to turn into zombies, it will somehow cheapen the book. I disagree. I think it would satisfy a lot of fans curiosity. I propose that you put it to a vote. Ask your readers to vote on whether or not they want the cause revealed. I assume that there are many who feel the way I do and would vote for it. Just consider it. It's not like if you don't reveal the cause I'm going to stop reading the book. I'll only stop reading when Lori's baby turns out to be some Shane/Zombie/Alien mixture.

I'm not going to be putting it to a vote any time soon. I have no plans to ever reveal the origin of the zombies.

Again, I can't say enough how much I love this book. I look forward to the twists and turns every month. Keep up the good writing and you will have a faithful reader until the end of this book (which I hope isn't anytime soon).

Sincerely,
James E. Ragan

No plans to end the book for a good long time. I promise.

Dear Funk Gang,

Your comic sucks and I hate you. (Just kidding)

I wanted to share some quick praises, observations, and zombie thoughts.

Issue №19 had a really great and creative cover. I was glad to see a sword and the nice “zombie control” devices that were utilized. I often thought to myself long ago “If I were ever in a zombie ruled world, I would definitely have a sword on me. In case I run out of ammo, this would do the trick”. I would probably carry a European Falchion sword instead of a Samurai sword though... Issue№20 was really nice, especially the opening scenes showing the going’s on of zombies. There was some nice comic, if not provocative observations by studying their movements and reactions. Plus it was great to get away from the human characters for a moment.

Speaking of zombie observations, I wanted respond to your comments regarding my last letter. I was the one who brought rigormortis and how it would constrict the muscles, causing problems for zombie movement. You responded by saying, and I quote “...you can’t pick or choose what’s realistic and what’s not... and “...it’s all throw out the window..”. Oh really? Hmm... let’s see what you have chosen for what zombies can and cannot do...

1. Anyone who dies turns into a zombie.
2. Anyone who is bitten by a zombie dies, then turns into a zombie (a la Romero)
3. Zombies attack the living and want to bite and/or devour them (a la everybody)
4. Zombies apparently attack animals, like deer and horses (a la twisted Kirkman)
5. Zombies are slow moving and slow witted (Romero and Kirkman)
6. Zombies can recognize humans by smell
7. Zombies can recognize humans talking or making noises (according to issue 19).
8. Zombies can see and hear and smell

I may have missed a few, but here is my point. We all pick and choose in fantasy. What we want a zombie to do in a movie, comic book, or whatever is up to us. However, if zombies could really become reality and the dead could come back to life, nature will pick and choose. Maybe the dead can come alive, but would be unable to walk,

or make noises. Maybe they would decay and crumble apart while attempting to walk. So once again I say, “zombies can’t happen”, but I guess in the fantasy world we could even make them sprout wings and fly.

One last point here. It is interesting that if a person is brain dead, their body can go on living for at least a short period of time. If their heart stops, then the body dies almost immediately (then rigormortis sets in and then decay).

Okay its question time:

In one of the early issues, Rick and Glenn proved to us in Atlanta that you can trick a zombie’s sense of smell and make them think you are a zombie. Rick and Glenn were talking up a storm though, and the zombies apparently did not notice. In issue №19, we see the new girl reacting with a vocal grunt to a situation and a zombie nearby reacts to it. So can your zombies recognize human voices or not?

Rick and Glenn were covered in goo. Whether it was sense of smell or not that masked their presence really well in Atlanta. It could have been the fact that they were covered in goo that could have looked like wounds therefore making the zombies THINK they were zombies. Michonne moved around freely with her two zombie companions. Again, this may be because they masked her smell and may not be. But when the zombie reacted to her, it’s not clear if it was going to attack or not, Michonne killed it before it had the chance. Clearly there’s a wide range of things that would get the attention of a zombie. I should also note that it doesn’t have to be the same with all zombies. Not all people react the same way to things and not all zombies would either.

Okay, Robert. Now for some really pointless questions:

1. Are you a night owl or an early bird?

Early bird I suppose. I get up at a decent our far more often than I stay up late... but I do stay up late and work on occasion.

2. Have you seen the 1980’s Italian zombie flick called “Gates of Hell”? If not, you should check it out. Very strange premise: Vampire-like creatures can turn you into zombies if you look at them. The way humans turn into zombies in this picture is absolutely horrific. I wont ruin it here if you want to see for yourself what happens to them. I actually saw this in the theater.

Never seen it—but I will NOW.

Okay this is my last thoughts, but mainly to the artists. I want to see variety with the zombies. No more bald, jean wearing zombies for awhile. Here are some suggestions:

1. Costumed zombies (give us a Romero clown or something)

2. Cowboy zombies (we're in Georgia correct? Surely some ranchers with cowboy hats are roaming around)

3. Zombie kids

4. Women zombies

5. Fat zombies

'Til the next (rigormortis- free) zombie attack,
Tracy Kent

While I will admit, there have been a fair share of bald shirtless zombies, there have been others. Plenty of others. Look at the opening scene of issue 20. You'll see women and children zombies. That said, we'll see if Charlie can't do some more unique zombies. Although, football player and clown zombies in the Romero flicks always bugged me.

Dear Letter Hacks:

Sorry, long time, no write. No excuse, either.

Even if it isn't explained HOW zombies came to be in Walking Dead, there seem to still exist rules. I've given it a lot of thought and tried to see where it may differ from other zombie stuff, including the Romero zombie rules it APPEARS to be predicated upon. Let me know if I'm just flat-out wrong about any of it:

- 1) If you die, you become a zombie.
- 2) If you are bitten, you die faster. It makes you sick.
- 3) If you act fast enough, you might be able to prevent getting sick from a zombie bite. You need to keep it from spreading through your blood stream so the only answer is amputation and fast.

This one is yet to be confirmed.

- 4) The only way to stop a zombie is by destroying its brain.
- 5) Zombies decay at different rates due to outside factors such as weather, state of the body at time of death and possibly, whether or not they eat.

The eating thing is speculation. It has yet to be revealed if they get any benefit from eating.

- 6) Zombies can smell death and decay and ignore it.

Suspected, but not yet proven.

- 7) Zombies are attracted to motion.
 - 8) Zombies bite and eat a bit but in general have no interest in digesting or eating all of their meal.
- I think it's been shown that they usually eat until*

something is gone or they've been interrupted.

- 9) Different zombies have different patterns. Some stay still and wait for something to come by. Some roam out on their own. Most congregate together.
- 10) They move slowly.

The rest of these seem fine.

We can also guess at some things that the zombies in Walking Dead may do:

- 1) They will eat animals as well as people, but the animals do not seem to become zombies.
- 2) They may vaguely recall what they did during life and emulate it. Congregating in cities, maybe more.
- 3) Their blood, at least in small quantities, does not seem to be a contagion, as our heroes have fought them hand-to-hand many times and would likely have gotten zombie blood in their eyes or in their mouth or in their cuts.

You can take a shower without water getting in your eyes and mouth. I don't think any of the characters have ingested zombie blood yet. I would imagine that would make them pretty sick.

Questions about the Walking Dead zombies.

- 1) Do they need to eat to keep going?
- 2) Can they communicate at all?
- 3) Do they want just flesh or brains?

While I far prefer the attention paid to our regular characters, I'd love to see the zombies' nature examined in further depth down the road. One thing almost all zombie films approach at some point is the characters trying to learn if there is a cure. There might not be, but with all the time they have to kill, you have to figure they'd think about it A LOT.

Keep up the great work. This is a great title.
Chris Piers

I still maintain that realistically finding a "cure" would be at the bottom of these character's "to do" lists. Staying safe and staying alive is more important than trying to figure out a way to stop the spread of zombie whatever. Also, they don't have equipment or know how to do this. They may eventually run into someone who does, though....

Kirkman you Bastard!

After picking up volume 1 of the trade back in October of 2004, then followed by volumes 2 and 3, I am now on board with the monthly issues with Issue №19. Congrats, I'm addicted. And now I

need my monthly fix. I can't hold out until volume 4 of the trade gets published. Bastard.

I don't really pick up many comics. At present I purchase Amazing Spider-man, Fantastic Four, Daredevil, and the Walking Dead. By far, your book is my favorite, and the best of the four. Followed by Daredevil. The Walking Dead is so well done, that it's a pure joy to sit down and read it. Since my first monthly issue was №19, I had no clue about those crazy letter pages. How come some publishers can't even include a letter page in their titles, and this title runs so many pages. Between the story, and the letter pages, this title is well worth the monthly price.

I just finished issue №20. Power Generator! What good is that? They'll need oil, or some sort of fossil fuel to get any electricity out of it. If there is some oil still in it, it will eventually run out. Then what? Back to the same problem. Ha! Here is a suggestion on how they can solve their long-term energy problem since we are under the assumption that nobody is delivering gas to them. They need to get some sort of portable power. Get a Yellow Pages. Locate the nearest Hardware store that has portable batteries with built in inverters and AC outlets on them. Probably at the same stop, they'll have Solar Panels that connect to those portable batteries in order to charge and recharge them. Once the place is located, get Rick and a few others to raid it and get the material to the prison. It won't solve all their problems, but it can solve a few things.

Anyway, keep up the good. Bastard. I'll be there supporting this title, as long as you keep surprising the reader.

AA

Thanks for the letter, AA. We'll see where things go with this power generator. Our crew seems to have a lot to deal with before they even get back to figuring out how to turn that thing on.

Dear Mr Kirkman,

My way to becoming a reader of The Walking Dead was pretty long and curvy. I guess it all started with Jubilee (as many things in my life did). About a year ago, when I learned that a Jubilee comic was about to be published in September, my first natural reaction was to scream from joy. The second reaction was to write to a comic-based web-group I used to hang around and ask "Is this Kirkman guy good?" The answers I got were pretty favorable, so I started to think that me and the little mutant firecracker finally got lucky.

Which proved to be true, by the way - after the series was finished, I considered it to have been lacking only two things - a better artist and a

longer story. Some time had passed, before I heard about a comic title that sounded kind of strange. So once again I went and asked, "What's The Walking Dead about and who's the writer?"

"It's a great story about people facing an unusual situation, namely zombies", I heard. "And the writer's Robert Kirkman".

That's how I finally became the proud possessor of The Walking Dead №17. And my respect to the man that can write with such a great style both about zombies and killers and about a sharp-tongued mutant sparkcaster grew even greater.

To put it shortly - You're the man.

Regards,
Daniil Iver a. k. a. Salamander

Cool to hear from you. I'm always happy to hear how people came to read this book. It's pretty odd that you came in from JUBILEE but that's fine. You got here and that's what's important. I got a lot of crap for taking that book on. I mean, I'm not a teenage girl and that book wasn't exactly aimed at my usual demographic. I've got to say, though, I had a blast writing that book. Mostly because of Cory Sedlmeier the editor, who after a while pretty much let me run wild with the thing. I recommend the book to anyone who's liked any of my stuff. I think it ended up being a cool little series.

Dear Kirkman,

I have been looking for quite awhile a comic, any comic, to replace Cerebus. Since it had it's 300th issue I have not been able to find anything worth spending my money on. I do not go for the Super Hero genre and I tend to favor black and white. Then my local comic shop guy gave me 3 or 4 titles to check out. The first one that 'stuck' was 100 Bullets. It took time to get my hands on Walking Dead as I later found out it is a hot read. But knowing that it was black and white (and being a Zombie fan) I knew I was going to give it a try.

I am glad I did. I bought the first 3 trades. They were very interesting.

Admittedly, I was thrown for a loop when artists were switched but that was a mild bump-in-the-road. I find that using the human viewpoint is rather compelling. It allows me to think 'How would I react' under these circumstances.

My only criticism is that the pacing is quick. Almost too quick. It tends to not allow what is happening to sink in. By the time I have an opinion or feeling about something we are into the next crises.

At Herschel's farm it may have been more realistic if the whole barn incident came up much later.

It was already starting to get cold and zombie activity waning. More time in the safety of the farm, to give a false sense of security, would have set up the loss of Hershel's kids and Herschel's decline into despair better.

Maybe so, but at the time I just wanted to keep things moving. In hindsight there are plenty of things I would do differently. All in all, though... I LIKE that the book moves at a quick pace.

Also, Thomas should have been on the loose longer. Thomas would have laid low for a bit before making another attack so quickly. As if he was still on that first high from beheading the first two girls and would need to come off of that before attacking again. I think he would revel in his captive prey's uncertainty and misguidance as to who was the killer. Plus it would have been a nice back drop for some Hitchcockian episode were everybody turns on each other.

I know this may sound more negative and positive but, truly, I am enjoying it immensely (not too many comics have you thinking after you stop reading) and I plan on being with you for the entire run

Good luck,
Dawson

Thanks for the kind words.

Dear Storyteller of Warm Fuzzy Tales,

Are they still making this comic?!?! Just kidding. I liked the walking dead character bios. Try to put in 1st and last appearances if ya could please. How bout some maps there, Magellan? I know the prison situation is gonna break soon. Have no clue. Maybe the generator will shed some light.

Brendan Walsh

I'll try to add appearances to the bios soon. That's a good idea. The map seems like a bit more work than I'm willing or able to do at this point. Plus, I don't really like being nailed down to a set area. Knowing the prison is in Georgia, south of Atlanta is enough for me.

Dear Mr Kirkman,

Is it possible to take out a zombie if you repeatedly hit it in the head with a Walking Dead Hardcover?

Thanks,
Paul Shiple

We'll soon find out.

Yo,

Since I started reading the Walking Dead I've become obsessed with zombies. I often dream about what would happen if there really was to be a zombie apocalypse. I've also found myself searching for other zombie comic book series and holding zombie movie nights! So, thanks for everything. I'll send photos when I finally get some of the Walking Dead artwork tattooed on me.

It sucks, it's late August and I've only read up to issue 20 because that's all that's arrived here in Australia! The frustration!

You're getting them about as fast as we do here.

Anyway, the artwork, depth and everything about the Walking Dead rules! It's also refreshing to see a female who's as tough as fuck, rogue zombie killah!

I'm hoping that in the issues to come you will reveal more of what the other parts of the prison look like. I almost wish I could go exploring myself.

x Franca x

Now, you guys have got to stop with this zombie dreaming stuff. I mean, really... it would be a BAD THING for this to happen in real life. You're starting to creep me out. Loonies.

Hello Mr. Kirkman,

I'm just writing to say that last Wednesday was my lucky day. I went to the comic book store and someone brought in their run of The Walking Dead №2-10. Don't ask me why. The owner of the store asked me if I wanted them. I bought them for cover price and read them all in one sitting. I really love the book and I'm going to get the rest of them next week and be up to reading it monthly. I thank Charlie, Cliff and Tony are also doing some great work as well. I love the Day and Dawn of the Dead. But zombie stuff has been sucking lately so I thank you very much for your work on this book and I couldn't agree with you more running zombies SUCK. Thanks for your time.

Cary Shenk

Cool. You keep reading them, we'll keep making them.

Well, that's it for another really long letters column for the Walking Dead. We'll see you in a few weeks or less (yeah, we'll be catching up on the schedule over the next few issues. That's good news, right?)

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hi folks! Amanda here, and I've gotta send the highest compliments to Charlie and Dave on this issue. You could always feel the punches in this fight scene, but with the added colors this may be our most brutal non-zombie issue yet. Just phenomenal character work, too. All that emotion comes through on the page and hits you just like it's supposed to. It's gonna take a minute to recover from this one, so let's get into some old Letter Hacks from back in the day.

And like lightning here's issue 23. As you can see this issue shipped a mere two weeks after issue 22 and in another two weeks, you'll see issue 24 on the shelves. We're trying to catch up on the schedule a bit and so these three issues are shipping in RAPID succession.

It's not the most ideal of situations for retailers, I know... but we've got to get that hardcover out in time for Christmas so I'm hoping you people will be understanding in light of that.

Also, in an effort to get this book to the printer really quick-like we're going to be cutting the letters column back a bit (well, A LOT). We should be back to our regularly scheduled insanely long letters column next month, so don't worry.

Now, let's answer some letters, okay?

Once again, great issue. Who's Michonne talking to? I think she's talking to her dead boyfriend. She seems a lil' nutty like that. I mean, notice she didn't mention what she was up to with Tyreese? Never try to keep secrets from the voices in your head people! It'll only result in getting your ass killed... of course, head voice might have to take a number after Carol!

Whееее! I just love all this soapy smut! But please, less naked Glenn, alright?

You can't have one without the other. Beggars can't be choosers y'know.

Sure hope Allen pulls through if for no other reason than to answer the question first posed (but never satisfactorily answered) in Day Of The Dead about whether or not severing the inflicted area of the body would save the victim. It'd also be great if he was bitter and resentful to Rick for cutting his leg off. Talk about your irony.

Anyway, great job once again all. I still don't like Rick much these days, but he really did pull a solid with Allen so I'm willing to reserve judgement for a bit longer.

Remembering to sign this time,

Darryl Etheridge

P.S. I don't remember ever reading what you thought of Land Of The Dead. Well?

Just read some past letters columns. I've talked about Land of the Dead about a billion times now and I'm NOT doing it again.

Sigh.

I liked it. I thought it was a good flick. I think the only reason it doesn't SEEM as strong as the other three is because we've all seen the other three nine thousand times and we're really grown to love them. Also, I imagine the slightly longer director's cut will be better. It's certainly no Phantom Menace. I liked it. Tell your friends.

Dear TWD crew,

Issue №21 was fantastic! The whole team really pulls together to make the comic better than what you'd expect from the average comic. I like that Robert's writing is through the characters, not about them. Case in point: three of my favorite panels in the book happen on page 3 when Rick mutters "That's not how it works..." to himself while thinking of what to do. That's great. I tend to compare movies and comics a lot (both visual media) and that progression of those three panels is the sort of thing an actor would think to do, but probably wouldn't appear in the script that way. It shows the reader that you're really in the minds of the characters. Charlie, as usual, does a great job of showing shades of emotion in the characters' faces. I love that; it reinforces the ebb and flow of the story's emotional level. As for Cliff, I can imagine that for some it would be very limiting to only work in grey tones, but he continues to enhance the art to such a degree that I can imagine a plethora of colors in the characters' world.

I thought the Clive Barker quote from Andrew Garcia-Price was pretty neat. I had never thought about the zombie concept in that sort of way. I had always assumed that it was just a personification of the basic fear of death. Ya' know, death persuing the living, never tiring, never slacking. Death consuming the living. I guess that's why I tend to prefer "slow zombies" over their running brethren, because I feel it better embodies the slow but steady approach of death.

It's funny to read issue 21 and the stuff that happens with Michonne and then read the letters responding to issue 19 and all the people who were buzzing about her! I doubt any of them expected her to turn out to be some reality TV influenced nutjob! The last two pages were great, it totally captured that "video journal" thing that is the cornerstone of most reality TV. The whole thing seems to explain some of her actions as well: falling in

line with the 'leader' (Rick); becoming a team player; and the stuff with Tyreese - making alliances with established 'players' based on sexual attraction? - total reality TV. I'm now interested in seeing whether she was always crazy or it was just the situation of the zombies that made her snap.

I think you're reading into things just a bit when you associate Michonne's character arc to reality TV. She wasn't so much doing a video journal as she was talking to someone I didn't want you to see. Don't sully this comic by comparing any part to reality TV. It's insulting. Now, if you'll excuse me, Survivor is on tonight and I have popcorn to make.

Course, in a couple of issues you'll probably reveal that she was speaking into a microscopic camera to her government superiors or something like that and I'll be the one who looks crazy! ^_^

At any rate, keep up the stupendous work!
Craig Dresser

Wait, GOVERNMENT SPIES!! MICROSCOPIC CAMERAS... that's not a bad idea... maybe she's working for the aliens.

Yo Robert Dude!

I had this dream last night where I was reading The Walking Dead issue 500 the cover was so kewl , Rick was standing on a pile of dead humans. Inside he was a zombie/cyborg working alongside an all grown up Duane, who seemed like a mad scientist. Only thing is they were taking out the humans. Wierd stuff man, please get out of my head! Oh by the way I saw "40 year old virgin" and you're famous now even more :) he was reading a copy of marvel team-up (№4 I think) with Iron Man & Hulk.I got wierd looks in the theatre when I raised my fist and screamed "KIRKMAN RULES" anyhoo if anyone else has any kirkman sightings out of the funnybooks please let me know!

Rob Steal

I don't want to alarm you in regards to your "dream" but what you were actually seeing was a little thing I like to call "the future." Have I blown your mind yet? No? Well, what if I was to say that was actually issue FIFTY!

Yeah, I know. I'll give you a minute.

Dear Walking Dead,

Before I say anything, I'd like to say thanks for printing my letter in issue 20, no one has ever printed something I wrote, so thanks.

With that said, the idea of having the bite kill a person, but not turn a person, has got to be one of my favorite ideas you've had and ads a fresh twist on the zombie genre once bitten rule. And I loved the panels when Rick figured it out, props to Adlard on his spot on art. I also feel extremely bad for carol, I didn't think I'd give a shit, but there ya have it. Your storytelling is so good I

actually care about all the characters. Cept Otis, I did at first, but after that n-word comment, he can get torn to bits for all I care. I mean even after being saved by Michonne and realizing that Tyresse might be the one of the few people he'll know for the rest of his life you'd think he'd drop the racist thing.

You'd think... but apparently he's just a shit head.

That said I love where the book is going, I love that it's a people story with zombies, not the other way around. And most importantly, I love that its a never ending story, I mean if the book last that long, we could see Carl grow up in to one bad ass survivor, cowboy hat and his daddy's axe. Just saying it'd be really fucking awesome.

I don't know if we'll be around THAT long but I'd certainly dig it if we were.

Finally, in my last letter, I realized I didn't name, the comic book store I go to every Wednesday, Cosmix (in Montreal QC) and that made me feel like an asshole cuz the owners are fucking great, had they not suggested the book, I'd have never ever read it. Which would have been a real shame.

Sincerely,
Jon Maggio

p.s. seeing most everyone get to plug something can I plug my own website www.jonmaggio.com

Thanks for the fine read again.

Y'know, technically you're getting to plug TWO things. Your comic shop and your website. The way I see it that's just not fair so I think I'm going to delete the plug for your website.

So does Image have a new rule that every Kirkman book has to be released on the same day every month? Two months in a row Invincible and TWD have come out the same day, and this week Battle Pope was added to the mix. Not that I'm complaining. Getting a nice big chunk of Kirkman once a month isn't a bad thing by any means. And at least I've got MTU to fill the gap.

Well, that's my fault. I seem to turn the books in on the same week. For some reason it always seems like the letters columns, lettered pages, and coloring for all the books ends up getting completed at the same time. It's weird.

About issue 21: 6 panels of "THUNKS!!"? Damn! I can't help but wonder if someone's going to make an artificial foot for Allen (if he survives, that is), or if he's just going to have to hobble around the prison yard. How would you even go about making a foot? I guess Herschel would probably be able to fix something up. Why am I so concerned about this? I'm glad you're featuring Axel more now. He seems really interesting to me for some reason. Maybe it's because he looks like Santa.

While reading the letter column to 21 it appears everyone wants posters. Well, when I was at WWC, Tony was selling large-sized prints of his TWD covers... why not just market them? I only had the cash to get

one (issue 17), but I'm already hoping I'll be able to get a couple more next year.

There will be a full-sized, full color poster available early 2006. How's that for service?

Speaking of WWC, while I was at your booth, I was trying to decide what to buy of yours (seeing as how I already had all of Invincible and TWD, my choices were limited), one of the guys working there actually talked me out of buying Cloudfall or Brit (it was Sunday and I was low on cash, so I could only get one) in favor of Tales from the Bully Pulpit. Considering you call it "one of the best comics ever made" on the back cover, you might not be that upset, but that's seven dollars I didn't spend on your stuff. Long story short: make sure the guys working the booth next year only try to sell your stuff.

Hmmm. Looks like I may need to have a talk with young Benito Cereno.

One last thing...thanks to TWD I have my first official "comics friend" after reading for more than ten years. Sure, every week I have to listen to him say "Damn, when are we going to get a new issue of Walking Dead?!" but it's worth it. Thanks for that.

Aaron Stege

Well, you and your new friends will be happy to know that I'm currently working on the letters column for the next issue RIGHT THIS MINUTE. It'll be in stores before you know.

Brave Sir Kirkman,

Ahh...late night letter writing. What a better time? I forgot everything I wanted to write. I guess I'll wing it.

By the numbers...

1. I am quite pleased that I'll be picking up issue 22 on my birthday in September. I'll be 22, as well... Luckily I age by years while you remain faithful to the monthly system.

Yeah, 22 in September... uh... sorry about that.

2. I am a huge fan of your book and it gave me faith that monsters have awesome stories and not just blood and guts for entertainment.

21. The cover to issue 21 is one of my favorite comic covers of all time. The butterfly is what did it for me.

C. I'm done numbering.

About 2 months after I read the first collection of TWD and had a Romero-thon with my friends over winter break I made a decision. Perhaps life altering. See, I have wanted to be a filmmaker ever since I saw Superman when I was four. Lately, with the drudgery of college bringing me down I thought I ought to just go for it and make a movie. With some influence from TWD and Romero I decided to do a zombie film. With heart. And brains. My plans for the film were to get some recognition and hopefully (beyond hope)

get a chance to say "I could direct TWD should it be transferred to film and played on a certain home box office network" (which, to get the full story in, would be the best medium in my opinion). And as soon as I began scripting my flick I heard TWD might get made before I do. I was devastated. But not devastated enough to give up. I will hopefully start filming my zombie flick in late November and if I can cut it together quick enough maybe, just maybe, it might get noticed and give me a little film cred. Even if I don't, this is one book I'd love to see faithfully adapted to film. Keep up the great work on the page and I'll keep spending money to read your books (all of them) even though I work at my comic shop and could just as easily read for free.

Yeah, who knows IF Walking Dead will ever get adapted to TV or film. I'm not losing any sleep over it. I'm happy to focus on the comic.

This ramble is over,
Sam Whitewater

P.S. What is with the alien invasion discussions? I only started reading the last couple of letter columns (can't find all the back issues) and I must have missed something. That's just what I need, zombies and aliens. Together. If that happens, I have to see a zombie and an alien holding hands and skipping through fields of dead bodies. That would be an awesome visual...

It's pretty much public knowledge that this book is going to "jump the shark" at some point after issue 75. That's when I'm going to start throwing in aliens for no damn reason. It's a running joke here in the letters column. Thanks for playing.

Dear Kirkman,

So right off the bat I ask to be a zombie and get turned down, now you tell a guy that you'll think about it. Just kill off Glenn. That's pretty much me...

Oh, and good job with the bite just killing them, not infecting them. I think we talked about this before, but a lot of people are confused about this. Everyone is infected already! Awesome Day of the Dead moment in issue 21 by the way! I expected them to cauterize the wound, but I like the way you handled it.

I did so much research for that I think I could successfully amputate a limb at this point. I'm glad you liked it.

Can't wait until issue 25! Here's to seeing a guy get carried off and feasted upon by zombies, leaving only his severed arm squeezed within the blood-pressure monitoring device! Or something equally cool.

I'm dying to have a blond pregnant woman and a black police officer land a helicopter on the prison roof or something. It's sooooo tempting.

Questions:

1. Will 25 be a big deal in this book? (I ask this thinking to myself that every new issue of a non-canceled comic involving zombies is a big deal)

25 will just be another issue. It's regular-sized and regular-priced... there's some cool stuff planned, but I try to do that EVERY issue.

2. How much did you love Land of the Dead? There are lots of haters out there.

See above.

3. What did you like most about it? Other than sequel possibilities.

I honestly think it had the best, most likeable characters out of any of the Romero films... and they all lived, which makes for GREAT sequel possibilities.

4. Did you know that the word "Zombie" (as referring to "a soulless corpse said to have been revived by witchcraft" formerly, "the name of a snake-deity in voodoo cults of or deriving from West Africa and Haiti.") was first recognized in writing in 1872 by Schele de Vere in "Americanisms"? It described, "Zombi, a phantom or a ghost, not unfrequently heard in the Southern States in nurseries and among the servants." Neat huh...

Now I know, and knowing is half the battle...

5. Did you SEE Zombie King №0!

Frank sent me pages before it even came out. I saw the cow before anyone else. Lucky me... I guess. Neat book. I wish Frank would do more.

So maybe the guy to win the Make-Me-A-Zombie contest could be the guy with the most printed letters (unless Piers wins...damn that guy).

Love,
Chris Pitts

I think you'll be happy to know that you're slowly edging Piers out in the most-letters-printed category. That fucker must have gotten too busy or something.

Robert,

Good afternoon. First, I would like to say that I have been reading comics since 1989 and never felt compelled to write to a writer/ comic letter column until now.

I have been onboard Walking Dead since issue №3. A friend of mine had turned me on to it. Since I'm always looking for a good read, I took his advice and haven't regretted it. I even sought out your other works. Invincible and Marvel Team-up are very good solid reads, but it's TWD I look forward to every month. Even when Tony stopped doing the interiors, I wanted to stop getting it, that's how fond I was of the way he drew these characters. But I found that the writing was so good that it kept me hooked. Tell Charlie that I have since come to love his work as well.

Tony Who?

You have become one of the great writers working

in comics today. My problem with Issue №21 is this, The last few pages are so predictable. I saw this with Michonne and Tyreese coming a mile away. I'm not saying this to sound like a literary expert on story construction, it's just that I thought you would go somewhere else with it. I didn't expect you to play it safe and go for the cheap mass audience thrill.

What gave it away? The fact that the cover for issue 22 with them KISSING was online months ago? Or did you actually see it coming in the story? I'll try to keep the covers a little less spoiler-filled from now on.

I was going to wait until Issue №22 came out before I sent this, but I came to the conclusion that there is no way for you to undo what's been done.

Hit me back
Clyde in NJ

It's all leading to something. Don't sweat it.

Kirkman and Co.

Just dropping you another letter to say how much I'm loving the ride so far. The Walking Dead continues month after month (give or take...) to be the best thing in print. Consistently, issue after issue, you put out a comic that is better than the one before it with no signs of slowing. In my previous letter to you printed in Issue №12's Letter Hacks, I (Who have been a HUGE fan of the zombie genre for the last half of my life) told you that I prefer the Walking Dead to any of Romero's works. While you pretty much said that I was a blasphemer, I still stand by my statement- Night of the Living Dead, Dawn of the Dead and Day of the Dead are three of my favorite movies in my collection, and yet, I'd take the run of The Walking Dead over them nine times out of ten. As such, I'm glad I was able to provide you with the "highest compliment paid to you"... You deserve it, man. Your book kicks mucho ass.

I still think if those movies were 24 hours long each you'd change your mind in a second. I just have more time to play with here--that's the only difference. Thanks again, though... it means a lot that you think so.

I've read through the entire run of the series (from issue №1 through whatever happens to be the latest issue at the time) going on ten or so times now, and by the sounds of a lot of the other fans sounding off in Letter Hacks, I'm not the only one. The Walking Dead pulls you in and doesn't stop to twist, holding your attention the entire time, every time through. Everyone I know that I've introduced to the series has read it through in one go, reading as much of it as they can. Then, when they're finished, the question I tend to hear the most is "Is this all you've got?"

There was a point where I was lending my Walking Dead trades out to as many people as I could get to read them... at one point, a new issue was being passed through eleven hands... Then, I decided that they would have to start paying up in order to keep reading. I've even offered to pick up the issue for them as most of them likely haven't ever stepped foot in a comic store.

You deserve the cash for the perfect, perfect book you’ve provided us with.

Wow, man--you’re an all right guy. Really.

Speaking of buying your stuff, put me down as another vote in favor of Posters... I’d be all over a Walking Dead poster! By the sounds of it, the cover of Issue №9 seems to be the popular vote (and I tend to agree- it’s my favorite cover thus far) but an original Tony Moore piece done especially for the poster would kick mucho ass as well. I’m also looking forward to December’s Walking Dead hardcover volume and whatever goodies you’re going to include in it... I can’t wait! While you’re at it, make any other Walking Dead crap you can get out there... t-shirts, action figures, decorative toilet lid covers- If it’s Walking Dead, I’ll buy it. (I guess I’m just a consumer whore...)

I’ll be getting right on those decorative toilet lid covers. I can’t WAIT!

It’s good to see that the books are getting back on time... while I don’t REALLY mind the delays (I used to read Battle Chasers), I still find myself getting anxious waiting for the next issue to find out what crazy twists you’re going to unleash on Rick and the rest of the crew. It’s also good to see that sales keep climbing... It’s only a matter of time before HBO starts knocking on your door to produce a Walking Dead ongoing TV series... (Fingers crossed...)

Issue 21, as always, set the bar for the series even higher... How the hell do you do it, man? The scene with Carl and Sophia is one of the best the book has had to offer thus far (and that says a lot). It’s stuff like this that make your book stand out from everything else zombie related. Brilliant, man... simply brilliant.

I’m digging Michonne so far, but like the rest of the fans, I’m dying to know her back story... It’ll also sweet to see her in combat when push comes to shove. She seems like she’ll be pretty cool in a combat situation. Cool twist on her at the end of Issue 21... I wonder just who it is that she thinks she’s “conversing” with... Having her pursue Tyreese is a sweet play, too. A nice “soap opera” addition to the story with Carol catching a glimpse of Michonne helping Tyreese “let off some steam”. By the looks of next month’s cover, Michonne’s just starting to stir things in the jail up too... Very nice.

If not a bit predictable...

The only thing that I question from Issue 21 is the fact that Axel is armed... I know he’s the only prisoner left and hasn’t shown any signs of untrustworthiness but I didn’t think that Rick and the rest of the group would take any chances after what went down with Dexter. I’m also surprised to see that the group is giving Patricia as many freedoms as she’s getting after issues 18 and 19... In a situation such is theirs, you shouldn’t get many chances.

Honestly what are they going to do? Lock her up and baby-sit her? It’s not an ideal situation and they’re making due. I doubt they’ll be giving her a gun anytime soon.

Also, I’m going to take a shot in the dark and say either Glenn or Maggie is going to bite it soon... They seem

to have a good thing going, and good things never last long in a world ruled by zombies. Also, I assume Billy is going to be zombie fodder soon enough as he really hasn’t done much thus far... Ben and the other Billy (see, you already have too many Billys... kill one off) haven’t really had much of a part in the story yet, either, and it’d be nice to see them used in some way, if only to feed the ranks of the living dead.

I would also like to commend you on your letters column, as not enough comics maintain them nowadays... It’s nice to see you taking the time to answer the large amount of letters you get in a given month seeing as you’re writing like fifty or so books in a month. Another testament to how great the book is, is the very small amount of hate mail you’ve managed to receive, despite the open call for it. You even went as far as saying that a negative letter is guaranteed to see print and still, nothing. That said, um, kiss my ass or something... (Is that enough to have this letter see print?)

Oh, one thing I’ve been meaning to ask- Will the alternate version of Issue 10’s cover ever see print in any way, shape or form? (You know, the one that I keep seeing online, with Rick with an axe in his hand, covered in blood, with the blanket wrapped around him? I’m pretty sure it’s Mr. Adlard’s art but it’s hard to tell...) If it’s an available variant, you must tell me where I can track one down...

Every possible issue of Walking Dead must be mine! (Again, I’m a consumer whore...)

That cover is going to be used for THE WALKING DEAD SCRIPTBOOK which will be out a week or so after this issue. Buy at your own risk, though--it’s got NO PICTURES. It’s 40 pages for \$3.99, ask for it by name. Also, that cover is by Cliff, not Charlie.

I guess that’s enough of MY ass kissing for now... Please, keep up the good work. I’ll be with this book as long as you’re putting it out- and that’s a promise.

Corey Janson

PS- I’m also REALLY loving Invincible, too. It’s great to see the diversity of work you have hitting the market. I only read it in trades, however, so the wait time in between sucks... Nonetheless, I can’t wait to see what you have in store for that book as well. (Okay, NOW I’m done ass kissing)

Well, if you hate waiting for the trades, I’ve got an idea-- BUY THE SINGLE ISSUES!! They’ve got letters columns, pin-ups, back-ups and all kinds of cool stuff.

Okay folks, that’s it for this month. I’ll make it up to you soon. Sorry this letters page is so short this time around.

Be sure to check out Marvel Zombies, the new five-issue mini-series Sean Phillips and I are doing for MARVEL starting in December. It’s going to be really cool. I promise.

See you in a couple weeks (I promise)

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

The series' fourth story arc concludes with both a bang and a whisper. Goes to show how much a little emphasis can alter a line a whole lot. Amanda here, and I'm thinking about how that final phrase not only resonates with Rick and the survivors, but with all of us who have supported this series at one point or another. Whether you've been around since the beginning, or hopped on along the way, we're a part of the story too. I am The Walking Dead. You are The Walking Dead. We are The Walking Dead... and still we're surviving.

Before we answer new mail next issue, we've got some old Letter Hacks to revisit here first.

Issue 24... coming in right on the heels of issue 23. Pretty exciting stuff, huh?

Did you guys notice the last page of 22 and the first page of 23 fit together to form one image? Pretty damn cool, huh? I stole that from Erik Larsen. Erik's done all kinds of cool shit like that in Savage Dragon. If any of you reading this like superheroes at all, you should buy every trade paperback collection of that series every printed (well, one copy of each—I mean, unless you're going to read it twice or something) it's mighty good reading.

Be on the lookout for THE WALKING DEAD Deluxe Hardcover. It'll be in stores the first Wednesday of December and will collect the first 24 issues (yeah, that's everything up to and including this issue. Pretty cool, huh?) along with a bunch of extras like the original covers, the original proposal to Image, some sketches by Charlie Adlard and Tony Moore... cool stuff. It's going to be an oversized monster of a hardcover and it'll clock in at around 600 pages. Also, it's limited edition. The print run will be kept to initial orders only... so this thing is going to retail for \$100.00. Steep, I know—-but it's comparable to other volumes of this nature... and it's going to have a cool slipcase and everything.

Now let's answer some mail...

Mr. Kirkman,

Back in 1987-88, I was a youth collecting comics from "Crisis of Infinite Earths" to "DeadWorld" to "Aliens vs. Predator". In '90, I was in high school and lost interest in current comics (with exception to Spawn) and quit collecting altogether after losing nearly 90% of my comics to a storage accident. So... we get to 14 years later. I'm talking with a couple of co-workers, and found out that they both were into comics (weird thing is... I've worked with one guy

for 10 years and never knew he collected comics!). To make long story short, I picked up an issue №12 (which was the newest issue at the time), and got hooked. I was referred to you by my co-workers and guys at the register. Now the reason I gave my sob story and have questions:

1) I heard "Walking Dead" doesn't print second printings, but I've got an №2 second printing. It's the only second printing of any Walking Dead issues...Could mine be counterfeit? Your comic is pretty popular here in Indianapolis, and hard to find first printings even!

There are second printings of issues 2, 7, and 8. It's just that NONE of them have new covers. I don't like variant covers very much. The copy of issue 2, I imagine, is NOT counterfeit.

1A) This relates to question 1....Could you reprint issue №4? It's the only issue I'm missing out of your collection!

Yeah, I'll get right on that print run of ONE COPY just for you.

2) I've read in Hacks, that you've never read Deadworld? Is this correct? One aspect that's similar with Walking Dead is the fact that... Nobody's in the clear on who's gonna die next! Other than that, you guys have different themes presented in your comic. Plus, I like Vince Locke, but Moore and Adlard have the best graphics.

Well, not knowing who is going to die next is common in all horror fiction, zombie or otherwise. But yeah, never read Deadworld--until the reprints from Image started up. I've read the first issue of that.

3) Kirkman--How many Superpatriots series have you done? I have War On Terror and America's Fighting Force sans issue №3

Those are the only two. Both are four issues long. War On Terror is late, only issues 1 and 2 have shipped at this point.

4) Anyone know when Fear Agent is coming out?

October. Issue 2 should be out around the same time you're reading this. Pick it up. It's a great looking book.

5) Were you guys serious about making it to issue №75? I know EVERY comic worker wants to print gazillion issues, but to realistically make it that far, would still be fascinating. Regardless, I'll be there for the ride till we get there. I promise!

We're in the mid 20s and the book is selling higher than

it ever has. At this point—making it to issue 75 is looking more and more likely every month.

6) Adlard—What else have you've worked on?

Charlie has worked on The X-Files, Astronauts in Trouble, Nobody, White Death, Codeflesh, Green Arrow, The Establishment, Warlock, Savage (collected in 2000AD) and loads of other stuff that I can't really rattle off the top of my head.

Well, that's all...for now. I hope this series is ongoing till issue 250. I'm sure you guys can handle the workload. Later!

Fred Robinson

You and me both—I'd like to do 500 issues.

You, Mr. Kirkman, have me to thank for instigating your phone number reveal on Newsarama. Yep, I went and done you a big favor by getting Bendis all riled up. For the record though I was not one of the idiots who called you. I ain't sinking that low. Anyways, I have a few questions.

1. Have you had a chance to read Mary Roach's novel "Stiff"? While it isn't exactly about the alive kind of dead it is about the dead kind of dead. It is a highly entertaining and very detailed account of what it is like to be, well uh...dead. Seriously though, you should check it out.

Never heard of it—I may have to look into that. Sounds cool.

2. Is there any chance we will ever see Tony Moore do a fill in issue? Come on man. I know you could get him to do an all Zombie 25th issue special.

Tony has moved on.

3. Will you ever do new Battle Pope work? I was a huge fan when these first came out and would give a left nut (you ain't getting Mr. Righty) to see some new Pope stories. How hard is it to throw a few stories together from that massive cranium of yours? Also, you have a knack for finding emerging artists, so I know you can find someone good to illustrate these new stories.

Toss in the right and I'll think about it.

4. Do you hear us fans when we say that we want some FUCKIN' Moore illustrated posters?

We'll see.

5. Can I please use the space in your book to tell my wife just how much I love her and how much I appreciate that she enjoys my interests almost as much as I do? By the way she is always the first to read new issues of Walking Dead.

In fact I use your book as a bribe to get her to go into the comic shop with me.

Lame.

6. One last question here. What is the next step in the Kirkman/ Bendis war?

Thomas Michael Mackiewicz

Jello wrestling.

Robert,

Thank you for bringing comics back into my life! Like others, I had been on a comic book hiatus until I found The Walking Dead. I started with the TPB's, picking up volume one while on my lunch break... I read it, and immediately bought volume two the next day, followed by volume 3 when it was released! From that point on I've been collecting the comics as they're released, and I've been buying the back issues... (In fact I just won a copy of issue №1 on ebay for \$64...) I'm really happy with the way the comic is going, though I am worried a bit about Rick. I'm worried that something bad is going to happen to him... Hopefully you'll keep him alive for a long while. Alrighty, onto the numbered topics, where I write a comment or question with a number in front of it, and you post a response...

1. I highly enjoy Charlie Adlard's work, so don't get on my case about this very small gripe about his zombies. No, it has nothing to do with their hair... But their eyes. The only thing I don't like about Charlie's zombies are the eyes.. They're black holes with white lit up dots for eyes, so it looks like they're monsters or something. They should have human eyes (though glazed over with cataracts in most cases), they're not monsters or demons, they're dead human beings. But besides that, good work Charlie!

I just flipped through Volume 3 and I didn't find one zombie like that. He's done that from time to time, yes, but it's not how he draws zombies exclusively. There's a lot of variety there.

2. Action figures. Get them made. Seriously. You could have two versions of the characters made! Like, one figure of the character before the zombie plague, and one of the character during the disaster! It'd be cool to have figures of Rick and Shane as cops!

We'll see, no plans for toys as of yet.

3. Get the damn posters out already! And you better not respond to this with "I'll look into it"! And uhh.. if by the time this is printed (You better print it! I just spent \$64 on one of your comics!), good job on getting those posters out!

I'll look into it.

4. Animated series. A lot of letters I've read have talked about who should be cast as who for a HBO series.. I say instead of a live action show, have an animated series, like they did for Spawn! That way the characters would still look the same... You'd just have to find some voices!

I'd prefer live action, myself.

Once again, thanks a ton for making TWD, and keep up the good work! That goes to all of you who work TWD!

Yancy Gotshall

On behalf of the entire creative team, THANKS.

Robert,

It's good to see how rabid the fans of The Walking Dead are for your book. It shows you are really connecting with your fan base. As I said in my letter published, "This is one of the best books on the market today. I can see what the strong appeal is." That letter was also published in a micro-press pub called Fantastic Fanzine as a review, hence the grading scale which seemed to cause some of your fans to take offense. Therefore, I have prepared an appropriate defense.

First of all, I stand by my grading scale. I've been reading and, yes, even collecting comics since the mid-1970's, so I have a pretty broad perspective on comics, and I think I "grade" books pretty fairly. Let's say Alex Ross, George Perez, and Frank Miller get an A+. Does Charlie rank with these guys yet? Only if he is your current personal fave. If I were to grade issue №21, I'd have to bump him up to a B/B-. He is growing as an artist. Just looking at the characters' eyes in various shots shows an amazing depth and variety of emotions. And nice use of gray tones leaves no need for color in this book. I think giving him an "A" now would be doing him a disservice. Are you telling me the guy has reached his peak? I think not.

Secondly, I stick to my point about not enough zombie action. This is a personal preference. One reader referred to me as a "zombie comic guru" and I'll take that as a compliment. I like the blood and gore. I like it in the movies and I like it in my zombie comics. I enjoyed the issue, I just would have liked a scene or two of brains hitting a wall, y'know? I realize the title Walking Dead refers not only to the zombies but the dead-men-walking humans left to deal with them as well. I'm a fan. I buy the book. I'm just asking for more zombies, that's all.

As far as soap opera is concerned, this book is top notch. Lots of characterization and interaction between the large and diverse cast. Great stuff. But look through issue №21. Where are the zombies? Other than a couple shots of them on the other side of a chain link fence, they are nowhere to be found. Was the issue intense anyway? Yes! The foot-chopping scene was chilling and revealed the morbidity of what the world has become. Tension between characters was upped in several scenes. The plot moves forward. This is a good thing. Lack of zombie action is a bad thing.

My long-time pal Stuart Kerr wrote the first incarnation of Arrow Comic's Deadworld. I used to

tell him the same thing. More zombie action! And he never told me to F off.

I save my ultimate compliment for last: I plunked down my hard-earned money for this book, and I'm going to continue to do so. I spent more than a cursory 15 minutes reading it, and even took the time to offer my personal thoughts in writing. Re-read that letter. I don't say this is the greatest comic in the history of comics. I don't say that, in fact, it's the greatest work of the English language. I do say that it's "one of the best on the market today."

I certainly don't expect you, Robert, to change your vision for my sake. But you've got a pretty big letters section, which tells me you want to know what fans think. So here's to honest communication between comic fans. And here's to The Walking Dead.

"The Peanut Gallery"

Ralph Griffith

Thanks for setting the record straight, Ralph. I'll put you down in the "wanting more zombie action" column of fandom. You'll be happy to know that I too have been craving some zombie action... so starting next issue, you'll probably be getting just a little bit more. That said, this book is always going to have long spells with no zombies. That's just the nature of the book.

I just finished reading issue 21 and it inspired me to write to you guys. This is far and away the best comic in the business. I am a big reader of Marvel, DC, Image and many independent companies and this is sooo much better than anything anyone else is doing right now. The key to this story is not the zombies but the humans and how well Kirkman develops them while at the same time bringing in new ones at the right time. This work is pure genius and will be remembered in the same light as early Frank Miller, Alan Moore type stuff.

Chad Morash

Tell that to Ralph Griffith--that guy wants more zombies and gave Charlie a B/B-... the dick. (wink, you know I love you Ralph).

Mr. Kirkman,

I know this a long shot, but I figure - what the hell. I run (but unfortunately, don't own) a small comic shop in Bloomington, IN, and out of our 30 subscribers, I've gotten 20 hooked on your work. Well, that's a lie. The work hooked them, I just shoved it under their noses. Folks are addicted to Cloudfall, Battle Pope [I loaned them my old FUNKOTRON trades], Invincible, Tech Jacket, Walking Dead, Marvel Team - Up, Marvel 2099 - I'm sorry. I should've just written your library.

If I paid for gas, lodging, and a beer from the local brewery if you drink, would you ever consider a visit to the shop?

Again, a long shot, but I figured, what the hell.

Thanks.

Andrew Rosenbarger

I just don't have the time for these kinds of things these days. Sorry. I've got way too much work to do for any road trips.

Dear Letter Hacks,

Well, you're just not satisfied are you Kirkman? First you renew my interest in comic books with Invincible, then you make me fall in love with zombies through TWD. I hope you're happy. Anyway after picking up the Invincible trades, Ross at A+ comics insisted that I buy TWD, he even offered me a full refund if I didn't like it (tricky devil). So here I am once again spending my hard earned cash on yet another wonderful book of yours. TWD has gotten me thinking, I need to be "prepared" in the event of a full blown zombie invasion (not too prepared mind you, because If you're the sort of person who's really ready for zombies, you're probably so crazy you'll die soon anyway) anyway, here's my plan to escape Lexington in the event of "ZMOG! ZOMBIES!". I'm in a particularly bad part of the city from a "ravenous flesh eating corpse" standpoint right on the edge of downtown, between the Police station, the university and three Hospitals. The first place zombies will be taken is either to the police station or the hospital so I've gotta act fast, as soon as I see reports of an epidemic involving cannibalism and infected bites, I'm gonna hop on my bike (there's no way I'm taking a car, have you SEEN the traffic in this town?) For protection I've got one of those ornamental piece of shit Katana's, sure it'll fall apart after a beheading or two, but it's light and better than nothing. At which point I cut across campus (which should be fairly deserted at night) and head towards the mall, once there I meet a friend (it's cool, he's in on this too) who has an apartment nearby, and happens to own a rifle. If the Zombies have overtaken the city at this point the two of us grab his truck and make for Wal-Mart (which will undoubtably be full of zombies, I mean how many people are in Wal-Mart at any given time? Hopefully we can take them out, but if we can't it's back to the truck) We load up on essentials after clearing the zombies: gas, food, ammunition, guns, and camping equipment. Once we're supplied we make for that castle outside of town, (you know the one that rich guy built for his wife before she left him) I know the house inside burned down but the walls are still standing, and come on it's a freaking castle! We hop the wall, kill maybe one or two zombies inside since no one really lives there and hey, we're set up for quite a while. Anyway what do you think? Want in?

Yor ob'd't, Brent Lengel

That's it, I'm MOVING.

Masters Kirkman et al,

In issue 19's Letter Hacks, Corby Daniel mentioned how the horror genre will parallel the socio-political climate of the times. I remembered reading an article in the University of Pittsburgh newspaper about a professor who was writing a book about this parallel, specifically films. I Googled for about an hour and found the article online. Professor Adam Lowenstein has written a book to be released in December entitled "Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film." I thought you and your readers might be interested. I'll pick it up. At that time of the article (4/4/05) he felt that it was too soon for the trauma of 9/11 to be available to film. I agree but I feel that your comic addresses the trauma not only of 9/11 but also of the current climate in our nation. Kudos for providing a cathartic and entertaining read.

First question: Have you considered going the Spring Pittsburgh Comic-Con? It's a small show but it's very zombie-centric. Both Romero and Savini attend along with assorted zombie actors.

I went back when I was doing Battle Pope, 2002 I think. Haven't been back. I got to walk through the Monroeville Mall though (the one from Dawn of the Dead) THAT was pretty cool. I wouldn't be opposed to going back.

First observation: Slow zombies are much more scarier than fast zombies? I asked my four year old (the true test) and he agrees. I've played zombie with him and his friends and they always get creeped out by slow zombie daddy, fast zombie daddy is just silly. Unfortunately its not considered proper for me to read TWD to my son but we did discuss the cover to issue 19 in great detail. We both thought the sword-wielding lady with the tamed zombies was really cool.

For once, we all agree.

Second question: I know you are prolific, but are you planning to start anything new? Any original ideas you'd like to pursue? Any existing characters you'd like to tackle?

I'm always coming up with new ideas for creator-owned series. I'm currently exclusive to Marvel and can't indulge. I've got a couple I just can't wait to do, it should be cool stuff. I'd also like to get my mitts on Spider-Man one of these days, in a regular series capacity-- more than just Marvel Team-Up.

Third question: Did Bendis really baby-sit you?!? That would explain a lot!

Well, it would certainly explain my attraction to bald women. But yeah, I grew up on the same street as Brian. He's considerably older than me and from time to time, he'd baby sit my brother and I while my parents went out. This was well before my family moved to Kentucky.

Third observation: I was just going to buy the trades but decided to track all of the back issues,

primarily to read the letters page! I appreciate your effort in each issue. I really love to read what others think.

I'm glad somebody enjoys this thing. I'm glad you all like to read these things but sometimes I'd rather drive nails into my face. These things just take too long to do and I never give myself enough time. It's always "time for bed, but I'll do that letters column real quick before I hit the sack" and then here I am... FIVE HOURS LATER. Sigh. I dig seeing them in print, though.

As a native Pittsburgher who was born the year "Night of the Living Dead" was released, I've always loved the zombie genre. I feel that your book has really elevated the genre to a new level. Keep up the great work!

Take care,
Jeff Moreci

Thanks for the kind words, Jeff. The check is in the mail.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

Let me first start off like so many before me by saying that I love The Walking Dead, love it, and this is my first time ever writing to a comic writer, and the love of your book isn't even my full reason for doing so. I have been following TWD in single issues since №19, before that I borrowed the first two trades from a friend and picked up the third after reading one and two WAY too fast. Since then I chomp at the bit each month for the next issue, I just can't help it the book is so good, and I also enjoy reading your letters column (your replies make me laugh out loud sometimes). I have noticed though that your letters column seems to lack one huge thing, female fans! Well, now you will know that you have at least one. I buy the book, not my boyfriend (he just mooches and reads my copy).

When I'm at cons, it seems we have a lot of female fans. This is really the one book I do that chicks seem to dig. My wife kinda likes the book, I think.

I have been working at a comic book store for almost five years and collecting comics for a bit longer than that, before that I read my older brothers books as a kid. Whenever someone comes to the shop looking for something new I suggest TWD, and this is very strange for me because up until six months ago I was hugely afraid of zombies. Seriously, it was my one totally irrational fear. We're talking changing the channel when zombie trailers were on TV and not even wanting to touch any books or comics zombie related, everything zombie gave me nightmares. But your book has changed all that, I now have Zombie Fever and I am not giving it up.

As a woman reader I have to congratulate you on writing totally believable female characters. Thank you for not making every single woman in TWD a total nut case and pointless when it comes to tough

times. I especially admire Andrea, and I'm hoping that Sophia stays on track with her wicked-ass boy friend getting ways. I also like the fact that Andrea takes matters into her own hands and hasn't let the death of her sister or being attacked by Thomas slow her down, it has only made her stronger. Thank you for creating such great role model worthy female comic characters, they are hard to find in the male centric world of comics. As are female fans, or so I've been told at conventions, but I know that there are more out there than just myself, there has to be, because you and your work deserve it.

Thanks, it really means a lot that you like the female characters. I try to make this book as realistic as I can, aside from the walking dead people, of course.

Thank you, and keep up the good work.

Amy
(honest!)

PS. - I also love Invincible and recommend that whenever someone is looking for something new with tights.

Mr. Kirkman,

First of all, thank you for creating the best damned zombie book I've ever read. Second of all, congrats on maintaining the closest thing image has to a monthly book. It is appreciated after those relatively fruitless Deadworld years of the eighties and early nineties when one was expected to wait a minimum of four-five months between issues. And while I'm thanking, congratulating, and generally kissing ass, let me add that the lack of walking dead annuals, spin-offs, cross-overs, etc make for a much more enjoyable stacked comic set that can be easily accessed in a timely manner... plus, we (i.e. readers, collectors, creators, parents) will all know that issue one-hundred actually means ninety-nine issues of previous continuity have transpired--no more, no less. That being said, I would still enjoy a flashback or two in the regular consecutively numbered series complete with emergency broadcast systems and rescue outposts. I know we've all seen these scenes before, but I'd still love seeing some of these more familiar characters' experiences during those initial shocking moments. So, here's to issue 125 and beyond, Mr. Kirkman. I for one can't wait for the aliens. But, alas, I will. Hopefully, on a continued month-to-month basis.

Still waiting for the war,
Matt Cashel (writer of the now-temporarily defunct paradigm/lover of the obscene--as long as it is tastefully done, of course)

P.S: so how about that hbo series and toylne tie-in?

Matt, Matt, Matt... Image has many monthly books. Noble Causes, Spawn, Girls, Fell, Invincible and many others come out monthly and are usually on time. But thanks for the compliments all the same.

I don't want to do too many flashbacks in the book. At first, I was going to open every TPB with a flashback, so every six issues the book would have a little glimpse into the past. It was an idea I abandoned really quick. I want to just move forward from here on out.

Just one more thing... approximately... any plans, tentative or otherwise, for maps of the traversed lands. on a related note, how about timelines? Okay, that was two but, and this is no excuse, I'm a big fan of both.

That and shock troopers. Oh, yeah, those future covers are looking sweet.

Once again,
Matt Cashel

I'd like to do some maps and timelines, but as of yet, I just haven't had time. Maybe sometime in the future.

Dear Robert

There is a fascinating albeit grisly science project aspect to Allen's wounding. Will he die and turn into a dead walker? Will he survive? Will his left foot turn?

After his wife's murder, Allen has become an uninteresting dead weight. In other words, a target. Talking about targets, turning the lights on after dark will only be a source of grief for our survivors. It will only attract more roamers, and other less decayed predators with guns.

This time what really prompted this letter is what happened in another publication. In other words, CONGRATULATIONS for winning the Wizard Fan Award in the Favorite Breakout Talent category. TWD is my favorite title and Invincible is a fun read.

Thanks. The little statue is so neat. This was my first award (and let's face it could be my only one) so I'm enjoying the heck out of this thing.

Victor Rosario Fermaint

PD Talking about Invincible, did you like Sky High? I read somewhere that a major studio optioned, Invincible for the Big Screen.

Paramount pictures optioned Invincible. I'm writing the first draft of the screenplay.

PD2 Are you going to Wizard's Texas show?

No. Not this year at least.

Have you seen Romero's The Crazies? Great card-playing gas masked soldiers. Again, looking forward to those post-25.

Matt

That just came out on DVD didn't it? Or was that the other—the vampire movie? Martin? I need to see both of those.

To all at the Walking Dead,

Ever since discovering your book at Comic-Con 2005, I can't stop reading it. Volumes 1, 2 and 3 go with me wherever I go. Since the books didn't show what the original cover arts looked like, I looked them up and eBay and damn! They were so cool, I just had to get every single issue. Tony Moore did a particular great job on Issues 6, 9, 16, 18, and 21. I'm not saying those are the only great ones, I'm just saying they're my favorite. I've asked this on a board I visit and got a fairly good response, but I wanted to know what your (Kirkman) thoughts on this were. What does the butterfly on the issue 21 cover mean to you?

Thanks for sharing your talents with the world.

Mike J. Cervantes

It means there are still caterpillars running around somewhere.

Hi Robert Kirkman and the rest of the Walking dead staff:

I just finished issue №21. Another great read. At first, I didn't even notice the little butterfly on the barbed wire fence. (on the cover) How sweet.

So Allen got bit? Oh well, he was chronically depressed anyway.

Amputation? It didn't work out so well for Miguel in Day of the Dead, if you remember.

I have the Zombie survival guide by Max Brooks and unlike most guys who write in, I think its only OK, not terrific. Its entertaining, but nothing greatly original. If you want it, send me a P.O. box №, it's yours, I'm done with it.

I've already got a copy, thanks.

If you (or the fans) want some decent zombie books try The Rising and City of the Dead by Brian Keene, Down the Road by Bowie Ibarra, and Blood Crazy and Stranger by Simon Clark. The last two aren't exactly "zombie" books, but they're similar.

Anyway, thanks again for the great comic. I'm looking forward to the Big Hardcover edition of issues №1-24. I'm sure going to pick it up.

Thanks.
Chad Kanishock

The hardcover will be out soon. Start lifting weights now.

Dear Kirkman,

I've never really written to a comic book before, but I see your one of the few that actually take the time to actually read and answer some of your fans letter, which really impresses me.

First off I want to tell you that after hearing many good things about The Walking Dead, I finally picked it up to read it at issue №18. 4 issues later I have to tell you, that you are very quickly becoming one of my favorite writers. I liked them so much I bit the bullet and spent a decent amount of cash to get all the back issues, and I'm very glad I did!!!

Normally I really don't care for Zombie Comics, but the way you write Walking Dead it just works. You actually make me "feel" for the characters in your book.

My question to you is, besides Walking Dead, what other comics have you written that you are really proud of? I would love to check out some of your other stuff and just wanted to see what you consider some of your best stuff...

Thanks for your time, and keep on writing those bad ass stories.... waiting every damn month now for my next fix hehe....

Ed Sherman

That I'm proud of? Jeez... there's nothing that I'm embarrassed of--but I don't know that I've done enough work to be particularly proud of one book over another.

I've done a ton of stuff. Battle Pope, SuperPatriot, Tech Jacket, Invincible, Brit, Capes, Cloudfall, Tales of the Realm, Masters of the Universe: Icon's of Evil, Reaper, Jubilee, Epic Illustrated (Sleepwalker), Captain America, Marvel Knights 2099, Marvel Team-Up, Fantastic Four: Foes, Magdalena/Vampirella, Space Ace... that's everything off the top of my head. I'm sure there's something I've forgotten. And there's MORE where THAT came from!

Hey Robert & gang...thanks again for printing my last e-mail. Still gives me a thrill to see my letter in print! I'm prompted to write this time through a preview I saw last night for December comics: Marvel zombies! Written by you with art by Sean Phillips (one of my fave artists). Ties in with the excellent Ultimate FF "zombie" 3-parter, but I guess you know that! Anyway, can't wait for that mini series!

Seems like Tony Moore isn't doing the Walking Dead covers from №26. Sigh, end of yet another era.

I feel the last few issues of TWD are building into something big. Though there's been action, it's kind of taken second place to the prison setting. Kind of like the calm before the storm. I have a feeling ish 25 the brown stuff hits...

Yes, I'm really excited to be working with Sean Philips

on Marvel Zombies. It's going to be a hoot and I recommend you all give it a shot. Although, it's going to be NOTHING like this book.

And before I go, to "celebrate" Romero's Land of The Dead being released over here (England) - which I haven't seen yet, but will do I hope, the BBC are showing his other "Dead" movies on regular TV. Sunday night, Night of the living, tonight Dawn of, & tomorrow night, Day of (which I've only seen once, so look forward to that!).

Couldn't get any better for a zombie fan!

Quick question; do you have an end yet to the series? An actual number where the story wraps up, or do you still intend to keep on going while sales/your interest lasts?

If you guys like the book so much, why do you want it to end? Would you guys be happy if I said it's going to end at issue 50? Would you want it to end at 75? Is it just a matter of KNOWING the book is going to last a certain amount of issues. Like if I said that we were going to go to issue 129, that would just assure you that we had a good long time to go, right? I DON'T have a definite end in sight. I have ideas, but it's a long ways off, NOTHING is set in stone at this point. Just rest assured that I have a plan and will do this book for as long as I can.

I'm sure you've been asked this, but what do you think of "Land of the dead"? I've read mixed reviews. Interestingly enough, one film critic in a national paper gave the movie 3 stars out of 5 (which for a "horror" flick is excellent!)

Anyway, just as I was cutting my comic list, I read about Marvel zombies. Never mind, it'll be worth the financial strain!

Cheers
Jeff

Okay, from now on, anyone who asks me what I thought of Land Of The Dead automatically doesn't get their letter printed. Starting next issue. You've been warned.

They mention something in Wizard about Rick finally losing it. Hasn't he been slowly doing that since he awoke in the hospital? Do me a favor, don't pull a Blue Beetle and kill him. Come on, let Rick live!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

When has Wizard ever been right?

And with that I can finally go to bed. No more letters for me folks, I'm all finished. Woo hoo!

See you here next month!

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

I, Amanda, remember the anticipation and excitement I felt reading the arrival of this helicopter the first time. We were only 25 issues in, and I was young and hopeful! Ahh, to be young and reading TWD for the first time again. Now, I'm just hopeful for new letters, and this milestone issue also happens to coincide with the start of our next story arc, so thankfully I'm in luck! Every six issues or so, we're answering some all-new mail in addition to the classic Letter Hacks. So, whether you're reading for the first time, or all over again, drop us a line. This editor gets nostalgic.

Have I talked about how much I hate it when adults talk about how young they were when they were reading THE WALKING DEAD? Man, that is NOT fun. I mean, I was half a baby when I started this book, but still. I believe I was around 25 when I wrote this issue, so there's a sharp contrast between then and now for me... now that I'm 54 years old.

ANYWAY, more about this helicopter bit to be revealed later in CUTTING ROOM FLOOR. You're all reading that, right? It's fun taking a dusty walk down memory lane for those. I hope you're all enjoying them as much as I am.

Okay... NEW mail, let's dive in! Kirkman out!

Hi All,

I first came across the Walking Dead two years ago when I was looking for a comic series outside of the Marvel and DC landscape. I soon realised that I came across a corker and I dived straight in and bought the first compendium. Without delay the rest followed. I just couldn't stop reading. I love its focus on humanity, the strength in community, relationships and REAL hard work. It has so many voices and its diverse cast makes it accessible to so many people. It was a blast to read and I hope more people discover it in the decades to come.

I'm currently re-reading the series alongside watching the T.V show for the first time. It's been entertaining to see what the show has added to the story and how it has represented iconic moments. Best of all, I've got my family hooked who's watching it with me (and are trying to coax comic spoilers out from me to find out what's going to happen next!).

Hold that information sacred, better yet, make them read the comics if they want to know!

I have a subscription to the deluxe series and I can't wait to experience the story in the single issue format along with iconic covers. But most importantly in colour! I'm going to be one proud owner of all 193 deluxe issues (and perhaps the one shots too?)

The goal is to get through the main series in its entirety first--still an impressive collection! But those one-shot

specials might make their way to color eventually. I'll never say never.

Thanks to all involved in making something that is loved by so many people.

Many Thanks,
James Teague, UK

Actually, Amanda! I'll go ahead and confirm that every stitch of THE WALKING DEAD will be colored (or coloured—that's for you, Charlie!) eventually. But yes, the main series is taking priority. HERE'S NEGAN, NEGAN LIVES!, all the short stories, all of it.

Mr. Kirkman and the walking dead team,

I'm just going to start off by saying I'm a huge fan of TWD. Like many others, I discovered the franchise through the show during quarantine. I had always been aware of the show but I simply never got around to watching it, but boy I'm glad I did. Over the past year or so it's safe to say I've become obsessed.

Starting TWD during an actual pandemic... you have a stronger constitution than I.

I finished the entire series in about two months thanks to the wonderful compendiums. You all probably get this a lot, but TWD is by far my favorite comic of all time. The world you guys have managed to create is just so unbelievably intriguing to me. In my future I plan perusing my dream of writing for comics and I'd like Mr. Kirkman to know that he's been a huge inspiration to me!

That's awesome to hear, Cooper! Good luck!

I have two questions for you guys. In issue number 193 I definitely was picking up on some old west vibes and I was totally loving it! Was that intentional? I especially love the 'western front' and hershel's traveling cart of horrors.

Well, yeah. The western vibe has been present since issue #1, or really Rick riding the horse into Atlanta in issue #2, and that continued to the end.

My second question is for Mr. Kirkman. I know this is probably a common question for you, but how do you get yourself motivated to write, and once you do where do you try and draw inspiration from?

Revenge, mostly? Half joking, but wherever you can find motivation, take it. My favorite thing about The Last Dance documentary is the famous story of Michael Jordan brutally shutting down some other player (not that familiar with basketball) in a famous game. And Jordan reveals in the documentary that he MADE UP the insult and convinced himself to be angry just to motivate

him. That's a champion right there. Kind of crazy? Maybe a little, but you can't argue with results. One of my main motivations when I started this book was to not be homeless, or rather, to pay off my debt and not have to move back in with my parents. These days I have to find motivation elsewhere.

When it comes to inspiration... just try to pull from as many different sources as possible. Literally anything you encounter can inspire something.

Thank you for everything you do!

Cooper Amadei
Wayne, IL

Thanks for writing, Cooper!

TWD Team,

I've been reading TWD single issues since №31 (in 2006! wow.) and I've never written a letter in because I just didn't think I had a good thing to talk about.

A first-time letter in 15 years! Welcome to the hallowed Letters Hacks, Michael, where you'll find we talk surprisingly a lot about how we'll never publish this series in color.

I wanted to thank you guys for making such an amazing universe - for the comics especially, but also TV, action figures, video games (Clem lives!!) and the Walking Dead minis game by Mantic. TWD has become an obsession for me like nothing else.

Collecting TWD comics has very much helped me get through the pandemic - I have two kids and a demanding job in healthcare and so this was a great outlet. I decided to complete my run going back to №1 a few months after the pandemic started and hunting for those issues has been an amazing way to pass my free time and relieve stress. Now I'm on to variants and exclusives and finding comics to be graded. This time around with TWD: Deluxe I'm collecting every cover at cover price and most of the incentives - gotta get 'em all.

I hope to meet Mr. Kirkman some day at a con after all this apocalypse stuff blows over and get my №1 signed - thanks for all you do!

Michael Ovsenik
Michigan

Always awesome to hear about comics helping people through the pandemic. It's rough out there. Especially for the healthcare providers. So, thank you!

Personally, I got through the bulk of quarantine by collecting and assembling Transformers statues and trying to collect a full run of Chris Claremont's X-Men run. That's been a fun challenge that is sadly almost complete. Oh well, there's plenty of other comics out there to collect!

Good evening Robert Kirkman
(or whatever time of day you read this)

I was a pretty big fan of your work from the 1/4 of

invincible I have read at this point and when I found out Walking Dead was being reprinted and I'd never read the series before (or seen the show) I just had to hop on. I am loving it so far. Though I gotta say I don't know what you're doing with Rick right now, but I'm hoping it's heading in a good direction. So I have some questions.

1. Most of these arcs/plotlines so far have been corresponding to a location. Example: basecamp, the farm, the jail. When you started writing this series, did you have a list of locations you wanted to see the cast of characters go through, and did you have any locations you wanted to do but couldn't?

I had a list of a few. Originally, the prison was going to be a high school, but we got around to the high school eventually. Honestly, the most important thing was the character drama. The locations were just backdrops, so while some of it was planned, most of it came organically from developing the character arcs.

2. If you knew anyone in real life named Carl/Shane before writing this, did they see your work and feel concerned for themselves based on how much you put Carl/Shane through in this comic?

Shane was just a random name picked out of a hat... but Carl is named after my father. He quite enjoys hearing Andrew Lincoln say his name constantly in the TV show. He's been to set a few times and got to meet Chandler and the rest of the cast.

3. Any music you listen to while writing? If so, what?

When writing THE WALKING DEAD, it was a lot of The Dirty Three and Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds. QUITE helpful to get in the right mood. We even used a Dirty Three song in the show at least once.

Thank you for this great series. I cannot wait for issue 20. (And whatever is awaiting for me in issue 75 that keeps getting brought up)

Stay Spooky
Ben Freedman
New York City

Enjoy the experience, Ben!

Letter Hacks,

Firstly, I'd like to thank Robert Kirkman for getting me into comics (my wallet is not so thankful). I have always been a fan of Marvel and DC movies and TV shows however the comics always seemed overwhelming, there is so much content I never knew where to start, so I just didn't. However that all changed when I saw the trailer for Invincible, I knew it was something I'd be into and that it was based on a finished comic series so I thought what the hay I'll check it out and bought all three compendiums and I couldn't put it down, finished the whole series in a weekend. I've read every comic/graphic novel I can get my hands on since and I even have something like 30 series' on my pull list at my LCS, TWDD among them.

It's so cool to be hearing about people who came to THE WALKING DEAD through INVINCIBLE.

Enough about invincible time to focus on The Walking Dead. My journey with the walking dead started my freshmen year of high school when I started watching the show after the second season I was really into the show for a few years until one of my favorite characters was introduced to Lucille... I haven't watched the show since. I mean I was also starting college and didn't have a lot of time for tv so it also kinda fell off my radar but to may to may to.

Shame to hear you're such a wimp!

So after my introduction to comics, I discovered Kirkman is also the mind behind the walking dead and so I knew I had to read it. I was about to purchase the compendiums when I discovered it was being reprinted and I knew I had to experience the series one issue at a time so I bought all the issues that were already released and immediately added it to my pull. I gotta tell you I am loving it, the walking dead has become my favorite comic and I look forward to reading it every time a "new" issue comes out. I am even going to go back and binge-watch the series to catch up before the final season.

Thrilled that we have two new TWD readers in this month's letters. This whole Deluxe edition was worth it!

Agreed!

I was surprised that Daryl was not in the comics he is definitely my favorite character in the show, before I started reading the comics Daryl Dixon was the first character that came to mind whenever TWD was mentioned, and to find out he isn't even in the source material, mind blown. So that brings me to my question is there a character in the show that wasn't in the comic that you wish you put in the comics, or a character in the comic that didn't make the cut for the show that you think should've?

P.S. I promise not to quit reading after Lucille is introduced...

We're going to hold you to that!

Keep making great content I may be late but I am officially a fan for life,

Sarah Jane
San Antonio, Texas

To answer your question... not really. I think Allen and Heath didn't get enough of a spotlight on the show, but I'm having a hard time thinking of a comic character I wish had appeared who didn't. As far as the reverse, I love Daryl Dixon, but I don't know how he would have improved the comic if he'd been there. Might have been a Carol situation where the TV show character is so much better than what I did, it's just embarrassing.

Hi Letter Hacks!

I used to read comic books when I was a little girl. The thing is, The Walking Dead brought me back to the comic world and I can't thank you guys enough for that.

Thanks! If you need me, I'll be over here crumbling to dust.

As many other people, I started my journey with The Walking Dead from the show - my dad made me

watch the first episode with him. Later it was time for the comics and honestly I like them like 10 000 times better! I don't even watch the show anymore, I just can't - not after what happened to my beloved comic characters - Andrea and especially Carl, my favorite fictional character ever. But I still love the comics so very much and being able to read them again, in color, is like a whole new experience. I love most of the new covers as well, they're all awesome! I recommend TWD comics to whoever I can and I just love talking about them.

It's been so awesome to see David Finch revisit all these iconic moments in the series for his covers, and some of the quieter moments too. His issue #32 cover you're going to want to look out for, we just got that one in and it's a stunner.

Finch is the best!

I even had that dream once - I was sent to prison (I don't remember why), but it wasn't the sad part. The worst was when some guy was selling some random issues of The Walking Dead and I didn't have any money on me. Real nightmare, believe me.

My other dream though was a crossover with Doctor Who, where Carl was the Doctor's companion and they fought aliens together.

I like the sound of that!

Anyway, Mr. Kirkman, I love your work in general. I am also a fan of Outcast.

I also like The Walking Dead video game (although I am still halfway through) and I pretty much enjoy reading Rick Grimes 2000 as well. This project was a pleasant surprise, love to see some new content of my favorite characters. (I am also very very happy with Princess being pansexual since I am too. It made my heart swell.)

This is the first time I'm writing to any comic book ever and it would make my day (week, month even) to get printed.

You won me over Julia, I've got a soft spot for first time letter writers.

Julia Daria,
Poland

I wrote to y'all about 2 years ago before the comic ended and you were kind enough to respond even though I was quite rude. Well I am not sure if anyone still reads this but I wanted to share some thoughts with you. Also please find my original comments below.

Omitted for spoilers but archived back in issue #190 Letter Hacks... we'll see it again eventually.

Over the last few weeks I reread the comic and realized that part of your response was very accurate. One of you suggested that reading is like a roller coaster and since I read the first 28 volumes in quick succession it all flew by. Once I had to wait for each issue flaws became more evident since I could not move on quick enough and this left me quite salty. This is pretty accurate as rereading the whole thing

at once I certainly had much less distaste as I could just keep reading.

This being said I still pretty well stand by my comments as I feel they are true. I do apologize for inconsiderate language used as yeah it probably is uncomprehensively difficult to keep something going for so long. In general I really did like the comic and while the last 20 or so issues remain a low point for me it is still some of the best out there. Thanks again for getting back to me, hope everyone is healthy.

Andrew

Being the new person here, who has not responded to your first letter, I'll agree that it's a tremendous feat in comics to sustain any story for 193 issues! We're just now at #25 in the Deluxe edition and while that seems like a blip in the span of the full series, it was a two-year journey in the publication timeline. For a story about the zombie apocalypse, I'll say that the thing that resonated with me most in TWD was how human it stayed throughout. Perhaps the wonder of it all is how we continue on so much like ourselves, even if the world changes around us. Then again, maybe third time's the charm?

Thanks for writing in again, Andrew. And clarifying your points. I always welcome criticism from all places. That said, I'm very proud of how the book wrapped up and happy you're in the vast minority of people who feel it was a low point in the series.

And those are all our new Hacks for now, but we've got some classics below. We'll be back in another six issues to say hi again. And for all you first-time readers, get that riot gear on.

-Amanda LaFranco

All kinds of cool stuff ahead! Including old letters! Woo!

-Robert Kirkman

Well, here we are at the landmark issue 25. We're not really doing one of those high-priced extra-sized anniversary issues... it just didn't feel right to me. So this is just another issue in a long line of issues, with many more to come. Who knows, maybe we'll do something special for issue 50. We'll see.

I'd like to take the time to thank all of you for sticking with the book this long and to those of you that came in late... I want to say thanks for giving the book a shot and then sticking with it after that.

I really do appreciate you folks giving me the chance to continue telling my story. I think we've got some cool stuff in store for you all and it's only going to get better from here. Charlie and Cliff get better with every issue and there already didn't seem to be any room for improvement... so if I could just step up my game a little, I think we'd have a perfect book on our hands. I hope you'll all stick around for 5000 more issues.

In other news, if any of you out there like this book... and also like Marvel super-heroes... you might want to give MARVEL ZOMBIES a shot. I'm writing it and the art is by the super-talented SEAN PHILIPS who's doing a

real bang-up job on the series. By now the second issue is probably out, so be on the lookout for it.

Also, I'd like to welcome aboard our new cover art team of Charlie Adlard and Cliff Rathburn. I don't know if you guys know who they are. Charlie is an industry pro from way back whose credits include X-Files, Astronauts in Trouble, The Establishment, Savage (from 2000 A.D.) and a little-known creator-owned book THE WALKING DEAD. He'll be handling the pencils and inks. Coloring the covers is the multi-talented Cliff Rathburn who did both pencils and inks on Brit: Red White Black and Blue as well as Fantastic Four: Foes and Reaper. He's also inking a few issues of INVINCIBLE over Ryan Ottley's pencils for me as well as gray-toning the same little-known creator-owned book Charlie draws... I already know they'll work well together. Let's give them a warm Walking Dead welcome.

Now, without further ado... let's answer some damn mail.

Robert, Charlie and the rest of the Walking Dead gang,

I have been a fan of the book since issue 4, and continue to maintain that it is one of a handful of inventive, and high quality zombie themed properties out of the plethora of zombie movies, comics, and books. I must say though, the current storyline is languishing. The energy and quality that is so abundant in the first 10 issues has slowly been eroding, and now that the characters seem to be locked into some kind of soap opera. I completely understand, or at least I think I do, the current prison story arc and how you are focusing on the unraveling of the group. I feel, though, that somewhere around the time Tyreese emerged from the gym after his battle with the zombie hordes, my interest in the characters took a nosedive. I don't feel that any of them have really progressed for at least the last 4 issues. Walking Dead is a story of survivors trying to cope, and I get the fact that right now they are hiding out, and trying to make a new life apart from the zombies outside the compound. I also understand that change is coming, and the ending of issue №22 brings things to a turning point. I'm not asking for more zombies, or aliens, or smart zombies, like so many others that contribute to this letters column. What I am asking for is some better character development so I actually care what happens to these guys again.

First, I should point out that not much time has passed in these last few issues, there's only so much character development you can do in a small amount of time. Also, the soap opera stuff of the past few issues was a necessary step in where I'm going with this book. It's not the way the book is going to be from here on out. I quite enjoyed it, but for some it seems, it's going to have to be a necessary evil. I think you'll really enjoy what I have coming up.

It would also help if I could tell the difference between them. Charlie Adlard, by all accounts, walked into a very hot book and was asked to fill some very large shoes. His work has definitely progressed since his tenure began, and the Rick-Tyreese fight of issue №22 really showcases his talent. It seems he has really gotten the action down. It is unfortunate then that in the more static sequences earlier in the issue, I found it hard to differentiate between Rick and Herschel, as well as Carol and Andrea, whose main difference seems to be a few freckles. It is nice that Andrea was given

a scar to help make her stand out, and that Andrea.. err...Carol is now seemingly dead. This will no doubt help in the identifying process.

I think it's a shame that this some readers blame Charlie for their inability to tell the characters apart. Charlie coming on the book coincided with a large influx of new characters and THAT'S why it's harder now. Also, the fact that the book is black and white doesn't help. The characters do call each other by name a lot but really, when you get down to it... their faces are ALL very different. Carol and Andrea for instance... have ALWAYS looked VASTLY different.

I know this must read like hate mail, but please take it as criticism from a fan. C'mon guys let's get back on the ball.

Jonathan Bullock

I welcome the criticism... this is much more fun than saying "glad you liked the book, thanks for the letter" for the millionth time. Also, letters like this lead to things like the character list in the back of the book and my desire to hang myself. You're really doing us all a public service.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

This is my third letter to you guys and I am afraid it is more of the same. I just finished WD№22 and I am still loving this series. I got onboard with issue №1 and I am still enjoying the ride. You guys are doing a hell of a job. Keep it up!

I must admit I write this letter with ulterior motives as well. I just read from Marvel that you are writing the mini series Marvel Zombies due out in December. They say that it is a spin off of the Crossover story line from Ultimate Fantastic Four. What can you tell us, or at least just me, about this? I really enjoyed that story line and the idea of you writing a Marvel Zombies story is AWESOME!!!! I can't wait!!!

It's about the Marvel heroes as ZOMBIES. It's wacky and gory and crazy and action-packed. I dig it and it's in stores now.

Michael Mora

P.S. In my last two letters I told you that my friend was a "stupid jerk" for not reading The Walking Dead. Well guess what? He's still a stupid jerk who has not picked up an issue of this series. So in light of this could you print in Letter Hacks, "Hey Terrence you're a stupid jerk for not reading our comic!" or something of that nature. It would be a dream come true. Thanks.

Hey, Terrence you're a stupid jerk for not reading our comic!

Carol committed suicide—wasn't expecting that one! You might want to update the who's who—she is still alive on there! Wanted to let you know that there is a Walking Dead zombie novel on ebay right now by a Guy N. Smith from 1984. Did you know about this? I look forward to your zombie marvel limited series—they couldn't do better for the writer! Here is a question that I haven't noticed, if you did do a mini series on HBO, would you pull a Stan Lee and

cameo in it? That would be cool. How much longer on the hardback collection? Issue №0—set it before the outbreak maybe? I Also cannot wait for the team- up with Spider-man and Invincible—very smart and unexpected team-ups yet! Another question, how come the survivors are not carrying around the heavy firepower from the armory or use the walkies to keep in touch? Anyway, thanks for the great job and keep'em dead!!!!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

As evidenced in this very issue, our heroes are just now to the point where they can catalogue the items in the armory. I'm sure they'll find a good use for all that stuff VERY soon

Dear Kirkman,

First of all, congrats on Ultimate X-Men! You changed my mind about it. I'll definitely check it out. Also, I have been using the picture of zombie Spider-Man in classic pose for some time now. Marvel Zombies looks great. And man, Piers always has me beat. It's all I can do to come up with five questions. He had like fifteen.

Yeah, but all of Piers' questions are stupid.

Before the questions, I wanted to warn everyone about a movie named Zombiez. Yeah ok, the title should have warned me, but I tried it anyways. Holy crap what a terrible movie. It was actually hard to tell who was a zombie and who wasn't. They walked normal sometimes, talked very well, used sickles (of all things), only ate intestines/ cheap sausage, and hid, threw rocks, and laughed. There is a scene where a guy scares off a hoard by wildly shouting and waving a meat cleaver... Avoid it like the zombie plague.

Ok questions:

1. Piers had a good idea. Any chance of an all zombie issue? You could even subtitle their moans. No wait, scratch that last part.

Yeah... THAT sounds like a Piers question/ suggestion. All zombie issue... right.

2. Okay, so do you think Miguel (Day of the Dead) would have lived, had he not thrown himself to the zombies?

Who knows... I guess the jury is STILL out on the whole amputation saving a zombie bite victim thing...

3. Assuming that at some point they will leave the prison, what are some other locations you have considered? Shopping mall? I thought the gated community might work out, until the snow melted. Spooky roller disco?

I really can't answer this... I don't want to give anything away.

4. We've been loyal long enough, how about that contest to be a TWD zombie?

Too complicated.

5. Did you ever join Zombiarmy.com? If so, did you ever get your free stuff? F'n Zombiarmy...

Man... if I did, I can't remember.

6. What is your writing time like? That is, what kind of routines/rituals do you go through when you sit down to write? Not like praying to Pittsburgh five times a day, but like putting on a Kiss album or writing in between commercials of Lost. How does the Kirkman do it?

Well, it certainly has NOTHING to do with any KISS albums (sorry Kiss fans—it's just before my time). I usually listen to music while I write... right now I'm rocking out to some very mellow Neil Young. I'm totally relaxed. I almost pooped my pants just a minute ago... it's THAT relaxing.

Well, like I've said before, you need to work on being more controversial. The stuff is still great, but I haven't felt a WTF moment for a while. No cows though. Oh, and zombie Sentry looks awesome. And Marvel Zombies is a good use of that internet derogatory term. Can't wait. Till the zombies start hiding behind rocks, throwing their voice to lure in their victim just to toss a small stone at their head to annoy them,

Your loyal fan,
Chris Pitts

Shit... have you read the script for issue 26? I need to take out that whole throwing their voices scene.

Kirkman,

You guys still have the best ongoing book on the shelf. Now that my friend Katie got me reading Invincible, you're the only other writer besides BKV that I read more 'n one title from. (I've trimmed my pull list to get more tattoo money.) Issue 22 was solid, but... I know that these characters are the heart of the story and all, but how 'bout some zombie action? I better see some running and screaming and innards before long. After Rick and Tyreese get through beating the shite outta each other, that is.

I'm sorry, I lost you at "tattoo money." You'd be MUCH better off buying more comics. I don't even know if I can read the rest of your letter.

I read somewhere that you're, like, 26 years old. I'm 23 myself and I would like to hear your thoughts on the future of comics as a young person in the industry. I mean, I don't know how it is out there in other towns, but at my comic store, I'm like the young guy (excluding the few kids underfoot buying gaming cards). I know there have to be some young readers out there, and I know there are a few artists and the like who are young 'uns but mostly I just see people in their thirties and up when I'm in line for my holds. What do you think about where comics are headed?

There's plenty of life left in this industry to be sure. Saying anything more than that in this response would keep me from having room to print ANY letters. I'm sure I've said something more in-depth on the internet... you've got one of those internet things right?

Thanks in advance for printing this 'cause I'm not creatively vulgar enough for Bendis. Keep up the good work. Same to Charlie, Cliff, Rus and Tony.

Van Barnett

Thanks for the letter. You're just creatively vulgar enough for me.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

A few weeks ago I broke my silence, so to speak, as a comicbook fan and for the first time in all my twenty odd years of reading comics, wrote a letter to a comicbook writer/creator. I won't tell you who it was, so you can't be jealous, but I would like to think you're in good company. I love The Walking Dead. I don't care what anyone else has said, yours is the first zombie comic book that got it right! I'm sure you've heard that before, but I need to say it too. Feel good about yourself, sir. You're a wonderful, talented individual and I appreciate all the hours of entertainment you've provided for me and so many others. So thanks, dude.

I got a kick out of reading issue 22's letters section, or a couple pages of it anyway, and finding out that I'm not the only one who saves my current issue of The Walking Dead for last when I have a stack of books to read. I have to save it for last, yes, I have to savor it—it's just that good to me. I also tend to eat my meals more slowly than my friends do but that's beside the point I suppose. Like you said about reading your favorite books first, if I did that, I would probably have a stack of unread books too. Shit, I have a stack of books I'll probably never get to as it is but those were all bought years and years ago when my tastes were different. You tell a great story and it's hard for me to sit still for a month after reading the current issue. I had a ball reading the early issues since I had to go back and buy up back issues—I still don't have them all but I bought the first trade so I haven't missed anything. I read Days Gone Bye in one sitting and was hooked instantly and I needed more immediately. I went out and bought what I could find, hell I even went on eBay to get issue 7 and I ordered a bunch from online stores too but after a couple of weeks I had fifteen issues to read. Fifteen issues! IN A ROW! Even then, I stopped myself in the middle to savor this book so I didn't speed through it and find myself wanting too soon. I probably would have written in earlier, after reading other fan letters, but I was too keen on reading the next issue to stop and read the letters section. Anyway, enough about that.

Good job. I can't say anything bad about The Walking Dead. In fact, I can only point out things I liked a lot in particular. "Ruh.", as a sentence, as a word, as a zombie utterance. I don't know why but I just like it. It's a good zombie word. "A zombie would say that.", I said to myself, upon reading it way back when. You're going to read this and then write Ruh. as a reply in the letters column, I can just see that happening. And then I'll be crushed because it'll be like we weren't really talking but I'll laugh anyway and—er, I'm sorry. It's late and I'm hopped up on energy drinks. Oh yes, before I zap ahead, I just wanted to say that I absolutely love the cover art of issue 1. It's brilliant. Tony scored huge there. Tell Tony he rocks for me. Er, please? Since I've probably tripped all the "insane fan alarms" in your head just now I won't take too much more of your time. Michonne's survival method, the chained "neutered" zombies and sword (silent weapon), that was ingenious. How the fuck did you think of that?! I

also like how you're exploring the fact that everyone who dies also turns, regardless of how they died (headshots/braining being the exceptions). I don't think I've seen that explored too much just like the idea of amputation to avoid infection was never really fleshed out (sorry!) in Day Of The Dead since that particular character died shortly afterward. I've seen a few zombie movies, all of the Romero ones of course, but not a great many more so maybe I'm just uninformed in that sense.

Quick statements: I just read your interview with Suicide Girls guy Daniel Robert Epstein—good stuff and, I knew they were Thomas' remains. Now, the dreaded fan questions (which may or may not have already been asked and answered— I'm so lame):

1. What zombie movies, aside from Romero's, would you recommend to me? I've seen Dead Alive, The Evil Dead movies, 28 Days Later, The Dawn Of The Dead remake, Shaun Of The Dead and the Resident Evil movies...

The Night of the Living Dead 1990 remake is a must. As is Lucio Fulci's "ZOMBIE" (but you can skip the sequels). UNDEAD is a brilliantly fun zombie flick. CEMETARY MAN is good. There's more but I'm having trouble coming up with them off the top of my head right now.

2. What'd you think about MTU making an appearance in the TV spot (haven't seen the movie yet) for The 40 Year Old Virgin?

It's in the movie too. Steve Carrel thinks MTU is funny... it's not just in the script, he's actually READING the book and thinks it's funny. I'm totally famous.

3. Do you ever write back to your fans? I mean, even just to send them their letters back with corrected grammar and spelling? I know you've thought about it!

I'm too busy for that nonsense. Half the time I don't even READ the letters until it's time to put the column together.

4. Ever find yourself wishing that fans still had to actually handwrite letters and send them through snail mail or are you glad for email making things that much easier?

Email is a godsend. I wouldn't print ANYTHING if I had to retype it myself... which is why I don't print snail mail letters.

5. Marvel Zombies, dream job? I saw you getting crap in the letters of MTU's early issues for a rotted corpse... A big "Fuck you" to the naysayers maybe?

That's as good an explanation as any.

6. Did you read any of the Zombie World stuff from Dark Horse? Love it, hate it? I thought the Eat Your Heart Out one-shot by Kelly Jones was especially creepy myself.

That was good and Winter's Dregs was good. The rest... not so much... but those two were downright amazing.

7. Did you read Romero's comic, Toe Tags from DC? Love it, hate it?

Romero is the master... no doubt. Toe Tags... must have been an off day.

8. Am I in trouble for not underlining all the comic book titles I'm mentioning? Come to think of it, am I in trouble for naming other publishers?! Eek... Don't sic Erik Larsen on me!!

I'm sorry, you've brought this upon yourself.

Okay, I'm done pestering you. Thank you once again for The Walking Dead and I hope you go way past seventy-five issues. My heartfelt thanks go out to Charlie Adlard and Cliff Rathburn as well, you guys rock too! I would say more but I'll save it for another letter... I tend to ramble on about artwork. Just keep doing what you're doing fellas, I love it!

Will T.

Ruh.

Dear Letter Hacks

Pardon me for asking, but will WD40 be the all action engine overhaul issue we've all been longing for? Sorry, been a long, hard, difficult week!

Cheers,
Jeff

For you man—I'll make sure that happens!!

Of course, I've never written to a comic before.

"The Walking Dead №23: Fist Fight!" Yay! The ubiquitous prison-movie punch-up! Fantastic! But before we get to that, I've got to say that №22 was a great issue. A slightly quieter episode, with lots of checking up on our survivors (I particularly like how you've been developing Axel as a more sympathetic, thoughtful character), and not one, but two big splash page cliffhangers! Yikes! Top notch stuff, as per usual.

All that said, I'm not sure what was going on on page 21 with Rick putting his finger in Tyreese's ear. Is that some kind of Crocodile Hunter-style calming technique he learned during police training?

I don't want Charlie coming round to punch me in the face; the art was great as ever, it was just a weird panel. Please don't hit me!

Kelvin Green

That's what's called a "TANGENT" in the comic world. Rick's not putting his finger in Tyreese's ear... it just looks like his is, on accident, because of the way it was drawn.

I thought it was funny.

And that'll do it for this letters column. I'll see you all back here very shortly for issue 26.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, readers! Amanda here. Just like that, our hopes of a functioning helicopter have been dashed, though what good would a pilotable helicopter been for this group, really? There's enough trouble happening on the ground! After some very emotionally fraught issues, I appreciated the humorous moments in this one. Especially Michonne's not-so-subtle nudge for Rick to chat with Tyreese while hack-slashing her way through zombies. Effective – just like this transition into some classic Letter Hacks. Catch you back here next month for what I hear is a big issue. Don't miss it!

Welcome to Walking Dead 26. Big stuff is on the horizon, folks. The next few issues will set the stage for the next couple years of this book. Big, BIG stuff... so pay attention.

Charlie and Cliff are doing a bang-up job on interiors and now covers as well. Looking sharp, fellas. Just wanted to get them a shout out. Young mister Rathburn is also doing a great job on back covers, which he'll be handling for the next bit of issues at least.

Now, let's answer some mail.

Hey Kirkman,

Merl Key and I both shop at Comic Cave in Columbus. He's gotten like four letters printed in Walking Dead so far; I only have one. Therefore, in a pathetic attempt to try to make up some ground on his record, I am going to send you two letters this time around. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but you gotta give me credit for the originality. It's better than the typical "OMG when is Rick gonna die, [insert lame joke about Cho's Zombie King here]" kind of letter. If you don't have room to print both, feel free to substitute one of mine for Merl's. BRB.

--Sam Kirkland

I can't believe I'm printing this.

Hi again Kirkman,

I'm still loving the book! No 23 was amazing as usual. Very brutal. You'll also be pleased to know that I ordered the HC even though I have most of

the issues and TPBs already. I can't wait for the Omnibus.

I gotta give a shout-out to Mike at Comic Cave for forcing me to buy the first WD TPB. Usually I can resist his pleas for me to buy something, but on that life-changing day I couldn't. Thanks Mike!

Really loving Invincible; that MTU issue was superb. And to all you readers out there: be sure to check out my reviews at HeroRealm.com (shameless plug!). Our Best of 2005 column in 'Lowdown & Dirty' should be up over the holidays, and I have a sneaking suspicion that a Kirkman book will be there.

And I almost forgot: someone the other day actually mistook my name for "Kirkman" and I had to tell them, "no, it's not like the superhero. It's KirkLAND, like the country."

That was a joke, BTW. Kirkland is still a much better name.

Don't ever stop writing this book!

--Sam Kirkland

I beg to differ. Kirkland always sounded funny to me growing up. When people would mistake my last name for "Kirkland" I would think: "is that a real name?" So in closing... you are the one with the lame name. Mine is totally sweet.

Dear Kirkman,

Now normally I complain about issue long fights (Bendis, Liefeld, etc), but issue 23 rocked. Very much like a real fight, ending with both combatants on the ground, exhausted and hurt. When I got the issue, I turned right to the letter's column and saw the last page of the book. It looks like (if you didn't see the preceding page) Rick shot himself in the head. Oh, and thanks for killing Allen.

1. Are you the one that comes up with the words representing sounds? WHUD! WRAMM! And my favorite, THOOM! Those are great.

I come up with them, but most of them are old comic book stand-bys... it's not like I invented them. Although, I think I'm the only person to ever use "Brakka-rakka-thakka-dakka-doom!" Which was over in Invincible or Brit. I like sound effects.

2. Do you think that Dr Logan and Bub are still out there together somewhere?

Different universe... and I don't own those guys. Dead Dog Comics is doing a Day of the Dead book with BUB in it. So if you're curious as to what's going on with that guy--give it a look.

3. When will we see a city again? That's the best stuff. Abandoned military equipment, papers blowing through the streets declaring "The Dead Walk!", and all that delicious carnage you want to see in a zombie film.

I too am anxious to get back to a city with the story... so we'll see one sooner or later.

4. OK, besides Romero's stuff, what are some of your favorite Zombie films? Ever see Plague of the Zombies? Did you hate Resident Evil 2 too?

I'm way to smitten with Milla Jovovich to ever hate anything she was in. Was Resident Evil 2 silly? Maybe a little bit... but I loved every minute of it. Never seen Plague of the Zombies. As far as other non-Romero zombie flicks... you've all got to go find a copy of "STACY" it's an Asian zombie movie that is about the most bizarre zombie flick I've ever seen. Not great, actually, not even good, but it's gory as all heck and it's just bizarre. I should probably publicly thank Mark Englert for turning me on to that...

5. Where are all the themed zombies? Who know, the clowns, bikers, etc? Lately it's just slightly obscured or shade-like figures in the background. Another reason to get out of the prison. Or, let zombies in...

Personally, I always hated the clown, Santa, cheerleader zombies in all the Romero flicks. I mean, they'd be there, sure... but what are the odds? If everyone in my neighborhood suddenly turned into zombies and starting walking out of their houses... they'd be in normal everyday clothes, at least 95% of them would be. The other 5% would be naked. Like me.

So the Invincible and Spidey team-up in MTU was great! I'd write to that book, but you aren't printing letters in it... I can't freakin wait until Marvel Zombies. I think I said something about it in another letter, but I can't remember those things. Then they get printed late and I'm askin about Land of the Dead or something after you've talked about it over and over. I can't complain though, these issues are coming out quick again. Thanks for killing Allen. Didn't even give that guy a chance to get his zombie close-up. Good job!

THOOM!
Chris Pitts

Glad you're digging this stuff, Chris.

Yo, Kirkman,

Just got issue 23 today. It was great, but not the best thus far I have to say. Almost every issue until now has been better than the one before it, but I have to say 22 topped the all out rick/tyreese brawl. The issue was still brilliant, just not more brilliant than the one before it.

I also noticed the two page spread formed by the last page of 22 and the first page of 23. It was a great touch by Kirkman (I assume it was his idea) and an even better job on the art by Charlie and Cliff. It's kinda nice to think it will be a straight up two page spread with no covers or letter pages or anything in between when the trade comes out, but I also like that you need to buy both singles to see the whole image.

It was my idea, but it's only fair to point out that I get it from Erik Larsen. He did it in-between Savage Dragon 30 and 31. I think he was the first to ever do that.

On another note, thank you for killing Allen (even after you said not to count him out just yet last issue-- you bastard!). I was hoping you would make that move, because if he lived, the characters would assume that cutting off his leg healed him, and go around cutting off limbs every time they got bit. This would give them an easy way out if they got bitten, and almost no one would die of zombie bites, which could get boring.

And Charlie, I especially liked the panel where Rick falls over the railing in the prison and Tyreese just misses grabbing him. This was the best panel in the issue in my opinion. It was really dramatic and very realistic. Let's not forget the rest of the team either- Cliff is doing an amazing job, as usual (where do you find these guys, Kirkman?), and good ol' Rus really makes the word bubbles pop off the page.

I find them the same place everyone else finds them. The bus station.

Now for questions. I know you love those.

1. Rick is gonna be okay, right? At least physically if not mentally? I mean, his hand is already beat to crap, give him a break.

I might.

2. Why the hell was Glenn just standing there the whole issue telling them to stop but not doing anything about it?

He's a little guy--he's not about to get in-between them. He doesn't want to get his ass handed to him in front of his girl. Who does?

3. I know, I know. The covers represent an idea,

not what actually happens. still, it bugs me that you showed Tyreese beat up on the cover when Rick was the one who really got his ass whooped. Why no Rick on the cover?

Rick is on all the covers, just about. And he was pretty big on the cover to 24. So if he had been on the cover to 23 also, it would have looked weird. I'm keeping Rick off covers for a while.

4. Alright, it's long enough already. When is the freakin' baby gonna be born?

Lori is six or seven months pregnant right now (I'd have to look in the issue to be sure). So we're two or three months off, book time, not real time. It will be SOON, that's all I'll say.

5. Will we ever find out who Michonne was talking to in 21?

Of course.

6. Why do the characters seem to be ignoring the mass zombie problem? They already have a good system to kill them- if they just killed ten a day or something they would be okay.

It's been discussed in the book, cleaning off the fence and such. It'll be easier now that they have the suits. They've been busy. Give them time.

7. Why is Patricia getting it so easy? Rick has punished all the other wrongdoers severely. Is it because she's a girl?

It's more because there isn't really a point. What could you possibly do to punish these people?

Okay, I'm done now. Thanks for putting out a great comic every month (I give you credit for trying) and keeping me going back to the comic shop for more. Long after the aliens hit the scene, I'll be kissing your ass in letters like this.

Jackson Buckley

Man, it's going to be totally cool when there're aliens in this book. I've been doing all kinds of research.

Dear Robert

RE: Issue №23

Jesus Fuck. Even by TWD standards, that shook things up. Rarely does a comic leave you feeling slightly out of breath, but the pace of this one left me exhausted.

Not as knackered as Rick, though. He's not a well guy.

Can't wait for the next one. Fortnight, you say? Great.

Every other bugger is plugging their favorite comics shop, so here's a mention for Gosh! in London, where this week one of the staff, when asked what was out, kept plugging 'a great issue of The Walking Dead'.

He wasn't wrong.

Regards,
Mark Clapham

Tell everyone at GOSH! I said thanks.

Rick has got to be getting sicker from his chest wound in issue one! Tyreese knocking him around probably isn't helping much! I am all for the police copter from Dawn of the Dead landing at the prison! Have you seen Undead? More like Unwatchable! Now I understand the whole bit about the alien landing jokes in the letters page because of Undead!

Actually, I think those started before I saw Undead. Also, they're certainly not a way of making fun of that movie. I LOVED that movie. It's got some really cool stuff in it.

Land of the Dead dvd is cool, especially with the extra about Shaun of the Dead meeting George Romero. Why don't you cameo in a zombie movie?

I applied but they never called me back. I think it's my prison time.

When is the script book coming out? I appreciate everyone's work on catching the comic up to schedule—when the hell do you have time to sleep? Loved Invincible/Spider-Man in Team-Up! I cannot wait for the rest of the story in Invincible! Will Rick cameo in your Marvel zombie book? Love your work and thanks again for the good reading material!!!!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

The script book is in stores now. Rick will not be appearing in Marvel Zombies. Thanks for the kind words, Bobby.

Robert,

I am looking forward to seeing you at San Diego Comic Con next year. :) Just read issue 23 of WD and thought it was the best one yet!!! A couple comments/questions:

1. Any thoughts on Showtime's Masters Of Horror?

I'll be buying the DVD. I don't have Showtime.

2. Any thoughts on the new Horror Channel (which I believe was supposed to launch on October 31st and air UNCUT films but was delayed for “technical reasons.”)

If I got it, I'd watch it like the dickens.

3. I am EXTREMELY excited about Tony Moore drawing Vertigo's The Exterminators.

Peace.
Andrew Rootz
Chesterfield Missouri

Letter Hacks,

So I was reading the Walking Dead thread on Comic Book Resources a little bit ago, and a user was commenting on how he thinks the book has been neglecting the zombie aspect of this zombie book for the last several issues. Then something dawned on me.

The zombies have become sort of a non-issue in the comic as of late. Yeah, the story's always been about the people who survived the zombie apocalypse and not the zombies, but the zombies were always there. Until the people moved into the prison, at which point Rick and company pretty much stopped thinking about the zombies because they were all trapped on the outside of the fence. And that's why the book hasn't had much zombie action. We as readers are starting to become a little too comfortable with a horde of zombies outside of a chain link fence because the characters are doing just the same. The absence of the zombie problem from the book is symbolic of the absence of the zombie problem from the minds of the characters. A bonafide literary device in a comic book? Tell me it isn't true!

And of course, we all know what happens when the survivors of a zombie apocalypse start to ignore the problem...

Holy smokes! You'd think I'd planned all this from the beginning. (wink)

Issue No23 was great as usual, but I do have a suggestion that would help me (and I'm sure some other readers) out a bit when digging into a new issue. The story always transitions pretty seamlessly from one issue to the next. I remember when I was reading the first trade I had no clue where one issue started and the next ended. No definitive end to the action in the previous issue means it takes me a bit to remember exactly where the last issue left off, especially when it was six weeks ago or more. Maybe you could put a “Previously In...” page at the beginning of each issue, as a replacement for the character guide at the end of each issue (which really doesn't need to be every issue anyway). Even just a smaller version of the last page of the previous issue,

along with a few mugshots of the characters that'll be showing up in the issue would be great. You don't need to go into a long explanation of everything that's happened in the series like Marvel always feels the need to do, but a short recap would be appreciated. I'm sure new readers would appreciate that as well, instead of just starting with a page of Tyreese punching Rick in the face for some reason.

Hm. I think I'll start doing that with this issue. Good idea.

BTW, the Invincible/Spider-Man MTU was one of my favorite comics of the year. Doesn't seem worth writing to the Invincible or MTU letters page just to tell you that, but it had me rolling with laughter all the way through. Great job, man.

Aaron Stege

That's cool. It appears this letters column is the place to talk about that book anyway. Hey, if Brian can talk about Avengers in Powers I can talk about Team-Up here. Although, we all know he does that because he doesn't have enough mail to fill up that letters column. The hack.

Dear TWD,
Great issue. However, I found myself more intrigued by the side stories (Allen dying and Carol living) than the whole fight and subsequent fainting. It will be very interesting now to see where Rick and Tyreese's relationship goes from here.

The overall story looks very much like the story of Rick Grimes and his slow, but eventual, “turn to the dark side”. I hope it is. But then again I'm even more excited by the cover of No25! In most zombie-apocalypse stories the remnants of government seem to be worse than the plague itself. I'm hoping for something different (like what I keep hinting at, the “turn” of Rick, though I will not be surprised if the “military” takes over the prison, and at first seem “evil”) and that this might take us into a larger epic struggle of survival for all of mankind. It will be interesting, again, to see how Rick interprets his responsibility to the group when others arrive who are equally capable, if not more so, of protecting them.

One constructive criticism, I'm not all for the big list of characters at the end of the book. You're selling bi-annual TPBs (plus the upcoming hard-cover) so any reader can catch up on all that information much easier than comic-fans could in the past. It was great the first time I saw it, but with each issue I'm liking it less and less.

I would rather see that space dedicated to either Team TWD (specifically regarding TWD) or fan-art, upcoming script previews for TWD, previews of other work by Robert and Team TWD, or a

detailed background of an individual character. This is just some random items flung against the wall.

Sincerely,
Merl Key

Thanks for the kind words, Merl. I'll think of something on the character bios. For now, though... they're not in this issue.

Kirkman,

I just read issue 23, and I think it may be your best yet! Not a zombie in sight, but still lots of great action! The fight between Rick and Ty was great. The cover set it up very well, and the first page was a great way to start. It'll be interesting to see how the rest of the group reacts to the info that came out during the fight (i.e. Ty killing Chris and Rick killing Dex). This one fight might open the door to many more. Glenn and Maggie running around naked during the fight was pretty amusing too...

Carol surviving her attempted suicide should be very interesting. How will she explain it to everyone else? Will they try to help her or look down on her for trying to take the "easy" way out (while potentially endangering everyone else in the prison when she turned if no one knew she was dead). ? Will they take it out on the new girl, Michonne? All interesting possibilities that I can't wait to see unfold!

I'm surprised to see Allen die so soon. I thought you'd drag this out a little longer so we'd get to see his reaction to Rick trying to save him. I also expected him to live so the group would learn that zombie bites don't kill if treated properly... Apparently, that's not the case though.

I don't know... Allen did lose a lot of blood...

I'm not quite sure what happened with Rick on the last page. Did he just collapse after the beating he took? Did it have anything to do with him shooting Allen? I guess we'll find out next issue...

He collapsed after the fight. The smoking gun is a little misleading.

Glad to hear there's going to be a poster soon. Any word on what that poster will be? Is it going to be one of the covers or something brand new? Or are you going to keep us in suspense by refusing to tell us?

Don't I always choose suspense?

Really looking forward to the next issue. I hope the fact that the aliens are now involved doesn't detract from the book... I really don't know why you revealed Michonne's alien ties in the letters

page though. That just seems like bad writing to me...

Have I ever been accused of anything less?

Thanks for all your hard work!

Jim Amato

PS - When are we going to get to see the zombies play volleyball?

Next issue.

Firstly, this will be my 1st comic write-in so get happy. punisher, ghost rider, cyberforce, team 7/ wetworks didn't warrant it, however, your comic has enough motivation for me now...that and a long ass doldrum on and otherwise slow Sunday night. So, long story short, the work you have put out is exceptional, well thought out, and most of all, inspired. SOME POINTS OF ORDER

1. Ever since I was 11 there have been a series of nightmares where zombies and similar imagery perpetuates. This is largely due to an episode one halloween where I watched "night of the living dead" alone, hopped up on sugar, in an old/creaky house with a lot of people wandering the streets at night, etc. etc. Now, at 29, they still persist however due to the advent of a certain psychedelic encounter, otherwise known as freshman year, I can now dream lucidly. Sometimes I get away, sometimes I get nipped, and so forth. Well, I took some initiative during psych and to be brief, they are a metaphor for anxiety concerning time (thanks dr. torrello). Zombies never tire, always pursue, and yada yada yada. This makes for good writing but restless sleep.

2. You've made a very believable microcosm. All zombie films work on this premise, but yours seems feasible. Wanna' say gothic-horror "Moby Dick", but it's more contemporary and believable.

More contemporary than "Moby Dick?" The hell you say!

The problems therein aren't so cliché'. The characters react on a very un-comicbook manner, more adult and complex, so again, well done. Rick in particular is an excellent study. He's the glue, but very few of his "crew" seem to appreciate that he's saved their lives many times over. But they crucify him when something goes wrong. №23 Tyresse is way out of line to be blunt. I would've thought he'd be more unhinged after his daughter and all that though. Glenn/Maggie seem very believable however.

Thanks.

3. The story's sine wave of action/dialogue has pissed off some readers, but it can't be all combat all the time.

I agree.

4. WTF is up with Diamond? I can't get No21 for the life of me and they are unreliable at best. Thoughts?

Well, the issues sell out pretty quickly after they come out. I'd recommend preordering them at your local comic shop.

5. will the origin of the zombie blight be exposed?

No plans.

6. A lot of people talking about a TV series. Such a good idea in terms of budget/acting. a horror- esque Lost? You going to jump on that or what?

Pretty much out of my hands. I'd certainly love for there to be one.

7. Your realism is incredible. ex) frozen zombies in the sub development. Very imaginative. The scene where the snow falls off the gate to reveal the sign was a masterpiece of suspension as well. classy...

Thanks.

8. lastly (pressed for time and must go), are they going to make probing raids out of the prison to find more survivors, kill zombies?

Maybe. I don't want to give things away.

Many many thanks and much respect,
Jeff Thompson ("taking it slow" and all that)

Thanks for the letter, Jeff.

Mr. Kirkman,
Thanks for the great comic. After reading the letters section in issue No22 with all of the zombie related questions an unasked question came to my somewhat warped mind: Do the undead who eat the living move their bowels?

Inquiring minds want to know.
Marc Cawiezel

That is currently unknown. It has to go SOMEWHERE though... but I would guess their bodies aren't working well enough for any kind of digestion to occur. Just for the sake of whatever... I'm just going to assume their bodies are so toxic they dissolve whatever they eat. Another thing is that most zombies really aren't getting to eat that much in their lifespan. A chunk here, a chunk there. It's not like they're constantly eating after the initial craziness.

Hey,

Walking Dead has officially become Loitering Snooze. Dance with who brought you... zombies... remember? Soap operatic tripe may have its place, but hardly in a medium with the visual potential of comics. So much promise squandered so abruptly.

Blecch!

-Joe

There will be plenty of action and gore to keep the manly men happy. Stick with it. If you'll excuse me, now... I've got a bear to kill.

I think this is the time when people stop talking about how great this awesome new comic book is and start wondering when it'll jump the shark. (Or have they already? I usually only gloss over the vast, endless letters page each issue contains) Anyways, not yet. At least in my book.

I'm sure a couple of people have complained about the lack of zombies in the past couple of issues. That doesn't bug me much. Walking Dead always seemed more focused on the characters and how they changed and adapted and grew in a world infested by undead cannibals. The long stretch in the prison illustrates this with more conviction than the rest of the title's lifespan so far.

The stint in the prison is a good example of the "let's hole ourselves up while the hungry zombies fester outside" aspect of most zombie cinema. In retrospect, I'm surprised "abandoned prison" wasn't used before "shopping mall", "military base", "fortified city", or "police station" were. It seems so obvious now, which is a trademark of good writing.

I'm glad this seems to be the end of that and the beginning of something new though. The prison train took you about as far as it could go and it's cool that some federals will be making their way to the book. I knew you were going to do that the second Rick began his big speech about how nobody was coming. Of course, the "big speech" is an old horror movie cliché, but your execution of it made it seem more like an homage than a retread back to the well.

The art is still solid. Sometimes the characters are hard to distinguish from each other, which was never the case when Tony Moore was on the job. Still, Adlard and Rathburn are growing as artists. I really like their experimentation with graywash in this issue. The tones have never looked better.

Anyways, great work. This is your most fervently loved comic book series for a reason.

Sputnik Jones

Thanks for the kind words, Sputnik.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I really enjoy your working on The Walking Dead, Marvel Team-Up, Marvel Knights 2099 and your arc on Captain America. I love how you, like Romero, focus on more of the human side of the zombie stories than just the blood and gore that comes from killing zombies. With that said here are a few questions:

1: We all got to read the Invincible issue of Marvel Team-Up. Which leads me to this: So when is Rick going to show up in Marvel Team-Up and kill zombie with Spider-Man?

Issue 27, most likely.

2: All joking aside now, after reading the "Crossover" arc in Ultimate FF by Mark Millar and Greg Land, I saw that you are writing "Marvel Zombies" and Sean Phillips is doing the art. I am now highly anticipating this mini-series knowing your approach on zombies and knowing that Sean Phillips will deliver with his art. How much did you enjoy doing the mini and are you jealous that Millar came up with the idea first?

I had a blast working on the book. Sean Phillips is a great artist and Arthur Suydam's covers are reason enough to buy the book.

3: What's your favorite zombie flick? Mine is the extended cut of Romero's Dawn of the Dead.

I still haven't watched that... I've still got that DVD sitting on my shelf.

And finally:

4: Have you seen Peter Jackson's "Dead Alive"? If not, you must get your hands on it now. The movie is the goriest I've ever seen and it's so over the top, it make me laugh so hard and just say, "That isn't right."

My dad made Tony Moore and I watch Dead Alive when we were in 8th grade. It changed our lives.

Keep up the good work and I can't wait to read where you take us with the new direction with issue 25.

Dale Varley

You and me both, Dale!

It was recently brought to my attention that I might not be making you smooth cats as aware of my other books as possible. So in an effort to do that I'll be swiping Bendis' style (yeah, again) and running a handy dandy

list at the end of these letters columns. Enjoy!

ITEM! Shipping the end of MARCH we'll have INVINCIBLE The Ultimate Collection VOLUME 2. It'll be a nice thick hardcover like the first one. It has issues 14-24 along with #0 and the Free Comic Book Day story and loads of extras. It'll retail for \$34.95

ITEM! THE PACT #4 is in stores NOW and has been for a few weeks now. It's written by me, drawn by Jason Howard and features the return of a certain villain from this very book. You don't have to have read issues 1-3 to understand the issue. It's a lot of fun.

ITEM! SUPERPATRIOT: WAR ON TERROR #4 is finally coming out. Sorry for the long delay. It's been resolicited for MARCH and should be in stores toward the end of the month. It's our big finale... it's going to blow doors off--which considering how much time we spent putting the doors ON... should mean something to you.

ITEM! THE WALKING DEAD keeps going strong, if you like horror or people talking, or horrific things happening to people who talk, you'll dig it. Pick it up. Issue 26 should be out around the same time--or on the same DAY as this issue.

ITEM! BATTLE POPE is coming out regularly after a small snag. Issue 5 is on stands now and future issues should be following at a monthly rate, or the fur will fly. It's a fun series, written by me, drawn by Tony Moore & Friends and colors by Val Staples. Ask for it by name.

ITEM! MARVEL TEAM-UP #19 is a kick ass story set in the Marvel Universe from 1991 featuring CABLE and WOLVERINE teaming up to fight THE MANDARIN. It features art by CORY WALKER and CLIFF RATHBURN and is going to be colored by VAL STAPLES. Ask for it by name. It's also a prelude to the big "FREEDOM RING" storyline that runs through Team-Up 20-24 featuring art by ANDY KUHN so pick it up.

ITEM! My second issue of ULTIMATE X-MEN should be out by now. Featuring art by TOM RANEY. It's a blast working on these characters and I'm hoping the fun I'm having shows. I've got a lot of cool stuff planned for my run, so check it out.

ITEM! Unless you've been living under a rock you've heard about MARVEL ZOMBIES my mini-series with SEAN PHILLIPS over at Marvel. The first issue just got a second printing and issue 3 should be on the shelves when this hits so be on the lookout--it's CRAZY FUN!

I think that's all for now.

I'll see you guys back here next month, or earlier. Until then, keep it REAL.

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome back, strangers. Amanda here, alongside our newest TWD character. Of all the first appearances this is certainly one for the books. The Governor sure took his time luring Rick and co. into his trap. We love an unassuming villain, and there seems to be a lot of them in this book. That should keep us on our toes going forward. But now looking back, let's dive into some old Letter Hacks from April of 2006. See you here next month, IF you survive the arena...

Christ.

In the proofreading stage it was brought to my attention that I'm possibly going to catch hell over this Zombie Arena Fighting since there was that cage fight in Land of the Dead. Once again, I've got to play the "I had this planned beforehand" card—which I'll admit is totally lame. All I can really say is that this will be more along the lines of Roman Gladiator Arena fights than Small Underground Bar Cage Fighting. And in the end... it will be as vastly different from that brief scene in Land of the Dead as this entire book has been from 28 Days Later.

We've got big stuff coming up—so stay tuned.

Also, I just wanted to give you guys a heads up. Sculptor Extraordinaire CLAYBURN MOORE has signed on to do a WALKING DEAD STATUE. That's right kids, we've got one on the horizon. I'm totally excited. I'll keep you guys posted and you'll see pictures here as soon as we've got them to show.

Let's get this show on the road and answer some letters!

Mr. Kirkman,

Hi, you possibly may remember me. I had the pleasure of meeting you at a Boston Comic Con. (there was an S&M Con next door... Woo Hoo!) My best bud (and alternate reality life-partner) Jon Hernandez took a picture of you and me together. (you were rubbing my freshly buzzed head). The picture is framed and proudly displayed in my living room. Jon was the guy with the totally out of control beard and I bought a Metal Men comic for you because of a story you related about your youth. Anyway, enough memory triggers.

Metal Man comic... I was lost before but now I've got it.

It's cliched, but in the 37 years (yeah...37) I've been reading/collecting comics, I've never written in before. I'm a zombie fanatic from WAY back. My buddies and I snuck into the original Dawn of the Dead back in '78 and my life was FOREVER changed. For a while I had "zombie plague" nightmares that would wake me in the middle of the night. I don't have them anymore

but when I have time to kill and my mind wanders, I STILL think about what I would do if it happened.

What actually prompted me to write was I overheard my teenaged sons and their friends talking about what they're going to do WHEN it happens. They were arguing about who would be the leader. My 19 year old seems to be the alpha male. They have a plan in place concerning where they will initially meet and where they will go! I got such a kick out of this because it's exactly how I thought at their age. (aaaahhh sweet imagination) This particular genre seems to affect fans so profoundly.

Anyway, onto The Walking Dead №24. The book continues to surprise and entertain. The "blow out" between Rick and Tyreese in issue №23 was unexpected but made sense. I've suspected all along that the title Walking Dead referred more to the survivors than the zombies. Wasn't Rick's right hand messed up pretty badly when he beat Thomas near to death? I've been expecting some sort of repercussions from that. Infections possibly prompting amputation? I guess the damage wasn't as extensive as it initially appeared.

It healed up cleanly because of the bandaging and what not. He's still got some damage too it—his grip is really weak. We'll be seeing more of this as time goes on. I'm not going to forget.

Oh, just saw the ad for the Deluxe HC. Looks AWESOME. Are the signed and numbered editions going to be available in limited quantities at various comic shops or will they need to be special ordered?

Fanatic for life...
Bob Dore

As you can see some of this mail is old. The hardcover has come out and the signed and numbered edition was limited to 150. Some people that special ordered it didn't even get a copy. Which is a shame. I really feel bad about that... but that's the nature of limited stuff.

Dear Kirkman,

"WE ARE THE WALKING DEAD!" I remember a time when you said early on, later saying that it was pretentious. Still, it's good stuff. It seems like the point has been made, yet the book has finally gotten to the point at the same time. Oh, and I complained in the Invincible letter that you didn't print my letters. I was going to say something about the covers not being as great as they were, but the preview for issue 25 changed my mind. Besides, the psycho look on Rick's face on issue 24 is great. Did you not print those letters cause I gave a shout out? I knew that was lame, but did it anyways. I think I also mentioned David Hume.

Man, college is killing me.

Man... I don't even know why I don't print some letters. Length, lack of a funny reply... who knows.

So some questions in wonderful numbered format:

1. Were you channeling Rhodes with Rick's rant?

Not really. I channeled Rhodes over in Marvel Zombies, though.

2. Have you ever thought about doing something with vampires? I personally don't care for them, with few exceptions, but it might be cool to see your take (but not in this book).

Shit... I guess I better get rid of the vampires in the next issue.

3. So what killed Allen? Infection from the amputation, zombie bite, loss of blood, or lack of will? Or was it my insistence? In that case, can you kill Andrea? She has it coming. Also, Allen is still listed as alive on the Characters page.

Yeah, I'm not running the characters pages again until I have time to update them. I'm not going to reveal what killed Allen. It could have been any one of those things.

4. Do you have a thing against guys named Allen. Saddest moment in Invincible history! Oh well, I voted to make him a Heroclix figure.

I've SEEN his Heroclix figure... it's GODDAMN GREAT. I don't know why I used Allen in both books without even realizing it. Oh, well.

5. Ever read Rick Spears' Dead West? Good stuff.

I bought a copy. Was really looking forward to reading it... and lost it to the piles. I don't know where the damn thing is now. I'll get around to it soon. I love the stuff Rick Spears and Rob G. do.

So hey, I can now alternate between the Spider-Man zombie cover of Marvel Zombies №1 and the Wolverine cover from №3 as my computer wallpaper. Man, the covers alone have sold the book to me. Give me that chance and I'll gush all over the letters pages of those books. Here's to two more years and more of Walking Dead and various other Kirkman zombie books. Can't wait to see the Ultimate X-Men fight Ultimate Voodoo Man and his zombie hoard? Do zombies hoard?

Chris Pitts

The only things they hoard are those cute little matchbox cars. They love those things.

Mr. Kirkman,

Issue 24. Whoa. That was some good comics. You guys never disappoint.

It seems to me that instead of losing it and going off the deep end as expected, Rick has really just opened his eyes and has finally come to terms with the way

the world is now. It'll be interesting to see how Rick's new outlook (that things will never go back to normal again) collides with the hopes of rebuilding society that a lot of the characters are still holding on to. And the cover to issue 25? Nothing says let's fight back for society's status quo like a bunch of riot cops. There is some interesting stuff coming our way, I am sure of it.

As for flashbacks, I agree with you. If I wanted flashbacks all over the place, I'd go watch "Lost" or something. Come to think of it, that is what I do.

Lost is a great show.

Also, will we see Rick dealing with Patricia now? She is crazy, or "misguided" I guess, and she's already put everyone's safety in jeopardy, which seems like it should be a pretty big deal to Rick right now. And I hate her.

Isn't it good to have people around that you hate?

Ok, that's all, thanks for rocking my zombie world so much, as well as my super-hero world, and my marvel universe world. You are a king.

Dan Means

Yeah... a BURGER king.

Thanks for another great issue, Kirkman (and Dead team). I wouldn't be surprised if you get complaints that almost the whole issue was a speech from Rick, but I thought it was a great way to slow down the pace a little after the action last month. Looking at the next issue promo, it looks like we'll be getting right back into the action soon enough.

I also thought it was a great way to wrap up the first hardcover. The last three pages really provided a sense of finality, but leaves the future wide open. It's clear now that there is no hope of rescue, and it's time to create a new life in the zombie world.

Speaking of the hardcover, I love the idea, but I don't think I'm going to be able to afford the price tag... Granted, it's only about \$25 more than the individual issues at cover price, but I don't know about dropping \$100 at once... Maybe I'll find a way to swing it, but it's looking a little doubtful...

One complaint I had with issue 24... While I really liked the last three pages (I'd really like to buy that two page spread from Charlie, but again, there's the money issue), I didn't really care for the line "We are the walking dead." It makes for a great splash page, but it felt kind of corny to have Rick explain the title of the book to us. I know you've done the same in your letters pages, and that was fine, but actually seeing it spelled out that way in the context of the story seemed a little silly. I guess it's just a personal preference kind of thing... It's not like it's going to make me stop buying the book.

Hoaky? Maybe... but I liked the impact of it. I went back and forth over that scene for MONTHS and in the end, I like it. Keep in mind... the characters don't know it's the title of the book. Or that they're even in a book for that matter.

I'm really liking this committee idea that the group came up with (I'm surprised we didn't see how that decision was made. Having us pick up when Rick wakes up makes it seem like it's really HIS story, yet you say he could die at any time...). Anyway, I'm looking forward to the first disagreement in the committee. Rick says he likes the idea, but after having total control for so long, I can see him getting frustrated very quickly when things don't go his way. Another throw down with Tyreese is almost a given!

Now for my numbered questions:

1. In Letter Hacks, one of your readers (Jeff) mentioned that Tony won't be doing covers any more starting with 26. I haven't heard this anywhere else, so is this true? I hope not, because I do really like his covers. If he is leaving, does that mean Charlie gets bumped up to cover artist?

As you can see, this actually happened with 25. Tony got too busy working on Fear Agent (for Image) and Exterminators (for Vertigo) and didn't have time to do covers for TWD anymore. I think you'll agree Charlie and Cliff have more than filled his shoes.

2. Well, I only had one question, but I know how you love numbered questions...

Keep up the good work. I'll be eagerly awaiting the next issue. You're going to keep them coming every one or two weeks from now on, right? We're getting used to it, and you wouldn't want to disappoint us, would you? :-)

Jim Amato

As you can see, keeping up the every few weeks pace is pretty hard to do. Eventually—we'll just be monthly, consistently. It's hard keeping things on track but we'll do it. That's the goal.

Mr. K,

Well, you've gone and done it again. My friend and I have been arguing over something that started with the latest issue of The Walking Dead, and once again we've become deadlocked. Hopefully, you can settle the matter once and for all.

Here we go again.

We know what happens when a zombie bites a person, but what happens when a person bites a zombie? I figure, food has to be a major factor at some point, canned goods and the vegetable garden won't last forever. At some point, those things could start to look a little tasty, especially with careful preparation and enough rosemary. OR, maybe there's some vaccination effect to be gained from eating zombie flesh. Being exposed to the active toxin while perfectly health might develop an immunity. I just want to know.

My friend thinks otherwise. She believes that no one in such an environment would ever become crazy or desperate enough to eat a zombie, even if the only alternative was a live family member. She also believes

that biting a zombie would be the same as being bitten by one: zombification.

I don't see it that way, especially in the Walking Dead world, where everyone is already exposed to the Z-factor, but I'm going to defer to the master on this.

If you could make the time to answer our question, I'd really appreciate it. Thanks.

Sincerely,
Ryan Walsh & Marsha Endre

I'm glad you asked this question. I don't think anyone would ever think a zombie would be "good eating" at ANY point... no matter what.

Dear Kirkman,

Wow!!! The newest issues are amazing. The cover sorta set me off though with the whole Rick's eye thing, but the "We are the walking dead thing!" that they said was just spine tingling. This is the first set of comics I have ever read in my life so you opened my eyes to a new world. You are the best damn writer ever. (By the way I love invincible!!). I have a few questions but first more complements.

Your comics are the perfect blend of Sex, Gore, Horror, Action, Comedy, Mind Bending, and freaky situations. Not to mention I am a die hard zombie fan. Okay now the questions....

1.) Why dont you just make the goddamned movie already?!

Not up to me. I'm too busy with comics.

2.) Can I be an extra?!

I'm going to go ahead and say no. Sorry.

3.) Why are there not a lot of children zombies. Maybe one of the twins or someone can become one.

Little legs... they're always in the back of the horde.

4.) Why haven't the survivors just sat out on beach chairs and just blow out the zombies' friggin' brains already I mean what do they do for fun other than have sex?

That would waste bullets. They use far fewer bullets just lying around having sex.

5.) When will a new character come in or another one die.

I'm not giving anything away on the dying front... but we got a new character this very issue... a few actually.

6.) Have you had yourself put in as a zombie yet? I think you should.

I'm in this very issue. Look for me.

7.) You should go up to issue 500. Maybe 501. How high do you think you will go? I just love this series.

Right now, I'm thinking issue 1000.

Those are just some of my questions. Just keep writing these amazing comics. I can't wait for the next.

Jason Rostovsky

Me neither.

P.S, This is my third time writing and I would appreciate it so much if it got in. please publish it.

I'll think about it.

Walking Dead is certainly one of the best horror based comics I have ever read.

1. In the Character bio pages at the back of the book. I have 3 suggestions. First one is to have the dead characters status written in bold caps. That would cause it to stand out more just how harsh this world of yours is. "Welcome to the Walking Dead world, Rick has a bullet with your name on it ready and waiting." Second suggestion is more of a correction. Carl has a typo in his paragraph. The word heavey. And third, well Allen is dead now, right? Still says "alive" in his bio (you ask for more critical emails, right?)

Everything will be fixed... eventually.

2. I can't wait for the alien issue. Will there be an Elvis sighting? Would be kinda cool if the aliens had been subjugated by the King after they abducted him. Have all the aliens wearing dazzling white sequin suits and with massive fake porkchop sideburns.

I was just sitting around thinking of something that would make it clearer this book has "jumped the shark" than aliens showing up... you've done my job for me. Elvis it is.

3. I have really enjoyed the prison storyline. I know that many are clamoring for them to leave, but the potential for stories isn't dwindling because they are in the prison. Although the roster is dwindling a bit.

The prison works... you people will see.

4. I look forward to the Marvel Zombies book, but I have to say that so far I have preferred your work on Walking Dead over the stuff you have done at Marvel. I will still be buying Walking Dead after you jump the shark with issue 75. (Apparently I am one of the only readers of TWD that hasn't jumped on with Invincible yet. I'll have to look into correcting that.)

What are you waiting for? The Invincible: Ultimate Collection contains the first 13 issues along with over 80 pages of extras for \$34.95! And volume 2 is out in March! Hop to it. And try Marvel Team-Up—it's SWEET!

5. Often the issue comes up about a movie or an animated series. I think a cable tv series would be great. But it would have to be from one of the big channels. HBO or Showtime. I appreciate the Sci-Fi channel, but they couldn't do some aspects of the series and in all honesty, there is about an 85% chance that a Sci-Fi show is gonna totally suck ass. Battlestar Galactica being the rarity. I would hate

to see TWD done poorly, it deserves to be done in a spectacular fashion.

We'll see. There's no news to report on that front.

6. I for one don't anticipate this series ending. I hope to still be reading new issues when I am 90. That puts you close to 700 issues, but I am confident you can keep the series fresh at least that long.

Thanks,
JimmyZ

I just turned 27 recently... so I've got at least five or so good years left in me. We'll see. I think Charlie's in for the long-haul... but he's already like 75 so we'll see.

DUDE!

I'm writing with a complaint. Not because you said that the complaints were bound to get printed, mind you. I doubt you even get that many. Anyway, I'm not so sure that the "We are the Walking Dead" bit in No.24 really worked. As a long time reader, I know why you had it in there, but I think it should have been left to the editorial or letters page; having a character say it came across as a bit too cute. Although I suppose we could put it down to an after effect of Rick's injuries.

Like I say, I see what you're talking about—but I liked it.

The rest of the issue was great though, and Charlie A's art was even better than usual for some reason. He gives the characters such expressive faces. Great work.

That's because Charlie is totally awesome.

Kelvin Green

p.s. I also really enjoyed Marvel Zombies and the story you did for the Amazing Fantasy book. When are the guys at the M going to let you take over the Avengers? Hm?

That's Brian's book. I think he's doing a fine job with it.

Robert,

I wasn't going to buy the Image Holiday Special 2005, then Comic Book Resources ran an article stating a Walking Dead short story is included. You know what? You are a jerk. I had to buy it now.

I bought it. I read it. Thank you for shining a holiday spotlight on Duane and his father; a great emotional, heartfelt story. Yes, folks, another fine episode from the world of (key ominous sounding music)...the Walking Dead.

Okay -- you are NOT a jerk.

Good save.

With how the story is progressing, how soon is Rick and the group's path going to cross with Duane and Dad? A long way off?

Sophea Uk

Who knows if it will ever happen? It's a big world.

Greetings and Salutations!

This is not the first time I've ever written a comic book. This isn't even the first time I've loved a book enough to write in and proclaim how much I love it. However, this is the first time that I have a feeling that my letter might get read. You see, I like a great many books on the market today. A lot of horror, a lot of superheroes, pretty much everything. Almost.

You see, when the first X-Men movie hit and Marvel changed their X-Books (Not everything I read, but a big slug of it) I felt betrayed. These were not the mutants I loved anymore, and they certainly didn't look like them. The movie was great in it's own way, but to bring the tacky leather to the comics... and all that damn chest hair... I nearly cried. I almost stopped reading comics altogether. Some random DC books, G.I.Joe, and the now defunct Sojourn every month kept me (mostly) in the loop. I didn't really care all too much about a great story (Although G.I.Joe is a lifelong favorite and Sojourn was an amazing story which never received the end it deserved)

Then things started to change.

One fateful day, my brother in law (Who is also a comic fan, and a fan of yours now) and I were perusing the local shelves. While he was looking for back issues of some sort, I was content on grabbing some random books for reading in the think tank. I looked through the units, trying to find an appealing cover to sway my vote. Then I stumbled on to The Walking Dead №4. I looked at it and thought "The Walking Dead', eh? Let's see...". I picked up the book and skimmed through it. Black & white, nice. The artwork grabbed my eyes. Unfortunately, growing up with the rise of Image and their early standard of eye blistering unnecessary detail swayed me from many of their projects over the years. I didn't realize zombie horror (I am a zombie fanatic) could have these awesomely simplistic styles. I held on to that issue and looked at the back stock, seeing that there were some copies of 1-3 sitting there, going completely unnoticed. I quickly snatched these and said to my brother in law:

"Dude, this looks fuckin' awesome!"

That was the day that changed my comic reading life. I say reading because I collect on story. I have to enjoy the story or I just won't collect the book. It kind of bothers me when people just buy a book for a collection and don't read it. It seems like a waste of time and money.

When I first read those four books, I felt so insanely happy. Loving the zombie genre had never been this fulfilling. The Romero films are cinematic gems, and as far as anything in the genre goes, this book is on that same pedestal in my book. No other book or film has ever come close, and you guys just crashed that wall down. The story was

so compelling. The characters were desperate and foolish, yet smart and snappy. Rick is a great lead character and his development so far has been so realistic and enthralling.

Soon I began a pull list at a friend's store which is now a mile long and I am a regular at all the local shops. I've recommended TWD to everyone I know, and with the exception of my 12 year old sister and my parents, they all love TWD and curse me for having all the back issues. Not only has TWD opened me back up to the vast comic world I had almost given up on, but creatively has influenced me to write more and give a much needed boost to my art.

So I thank everyone who has ever contributed to TWD. The book remains amazing and is nearly the only mainstay of my pull list (G.I.Joe and a few others have been there since the start as well). And yes, I have to be an asshole and have a few questions:

1) Mr. Kirkman, what are your top 5 albums? To write to or otherwise.

Uh, top five off the top of my head? Neil Young's Harvest, David Bowie's Let's Dance, Nick Cave's Let Love In, The Presidents Of The United States Of America's first album. But like I say, that's just off the top of my head.

2) Mr. Adlard, same question. Only for you it's "to draw to or otherwise".

Y'know, I really shouldn't do these at the last minute... then I could actually contact Charlie for stuff like this. The thing is... Charlie doesn't read these letters columns, I'm sure. Let's see. Charlie—your mom's a wanker. That should get his attention. More news as it develops.

3) Will we ever see any more of Morgan and Duane Jones from the first issue? Unless I missed something, it seems like they could pop up at any moment...

Maybe one of these days. They were in the Image Christmas Special.

If I'm being a broken record kill me, but I keep reading about posters, toys and t-shirts. That would be one of the ten best ideas ever. Right after hygienic products and just before contraceptives. I know I would buy a shit load of toys of these guys.

So there's my two cents and the story of how I fell in love with your book.

Until Issue №127 where Rick has a laser guided sword (Have you seen "Versus"? It's great!),

Your loyal fan-
Gareth Darko

My friend has been trying to get me to watch Versus for years... I've borrowed it from him at least three times and I never find time to watch it. One of these days though...

See you cats here again next month, right? You better believe it!

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

If The Governor's nature was still up for question at the end of last issue, it becomes abundantly clear in this one that he's a monster. Amanda here, and there have been very few times I've actively hoped a character will get theirs, but this is one of them. Whatever justice is left in this post-apocalyptic zombie world, I hope it finds The Governor, and finds him quick. We'll leave things at that and get into some classic Letters Hacks while we wait to see what comes...

Welcome to issue 28. Crazy stuff, huh?

We're doing an extra-sized letters page this month, so I don't want to waste any time. Let's get to it!

Mr. Kirkman (Can I call you Rob?),

You, sir, are a writer who has been on my mind for some time. Up to this point, I had read very little of your work, and I was heartbroken to see your revamped Sleepwalker cut down before it even began. I am steady tracking down as much of your material as I can, which brings me to TWD.

As I write this, TWD is already up to issue 24. Within the last two hours, I have made my way through issues 1-12 before finally forcing myself to stop and get some much needed sleep (my reading is as many as four years behind on a lot of titles but I continue to collect them like the info junkie that I am). I became an uncle just last night, and while waiting for my ride to take me to the hospital, I read TWD №1. It really had a Day of the Triffids thing going for it when the story started (I mean the original book, not the movie), and I was a little too excited to see my newborn nephew to think much more of it than that. When I got back home, however, rather than taking a nap, something clicked inside me and I picked up №2 and read on. Although my nephew is more important to me, I made a bitter mistake in almost passing TWD up entirely, one that my brother and I are sure to keep my nephew from making in about 10 years or so when we decide to throw all our gory adult fan interests his way (think 10's too young? Here's your chance, CPS... catch me if you can. I'm openly advocating contributing to the delinquency of children and trying to get it published.)

I digress... I'll try not to do that too often. I used to have a pretty mind. I think comics really do rot your brain... especially when you put aside every other form of literature for them. I used to write long-winded, eloquent letters of praise or anger to letters columns, only two of which got printed. Now I spend hours trying to type simple emails to friends or colleagues. Nonetheless, I am more than happy to shed some excruciatingly single, 28-year-old brain cells for TWD. I feel a sense of shame in saying that Resident Evil got

me into these kinds of stories as an adult... but that shame is lifted off my shoulders a bit when I remember watching The Gates of Hell and Night of the Zombies numerous times from the age of 5 up.... and losing sleep every night after watching them (and CPS never said a word to my mom). This is opinion, mind you, so please withhold as much scorn of blasphemy as possible, but being scared and disgusted used to be a cornerstone of the genre from where I look at it.

George Romero seemed to be the only one who focused more on the story than the gore (the two aforementioned films were both from Italy and poorly dubbed... hard to pay attention to a storyline with dialogue that bad so what else did I have?) I'm a hypocrite, though, as I was raised on Godzilla movies, so the blame really goes to my mood swings. It took me a lot of years to mood swing back into zombies, and Resident Evil just happened to be the trigger.

As a rule of thumb, the sensitive, caring and emotional horror-watcher (or in less-sissified terms I like to use: the fellow writer who engages in the story for the story itself and not the eye candy) has to go into a horror story remembering one thing: "Don't get attached to anyone." You made me forget that, damn you. Donna was my grandmother incarnate, and her passing hit me harder than Carl getting shot mere pages later. And being a person who has leadership skills he never really wanted, Rick reminds me a lot of myself. He's the kind of man who gives me a sense of strength that, despite my antisocial unwillingness to participate in a lot of things, I could get the job done. He's not a man without his flaws and breaking points... no man is, but you picked the right man for the job. I notice you don't like being complimented over Romero, so I will say gracefully (cop out) that you got me more attached to your characters than Romero to his because Romero's didn't tend to survive as long as most of yours have. You made it impossible for me to keep a cool detachment, making it perhaps one of the most enjoyable tragic stories I have ever read. And with a degree in literature I mean tragic in the purest definition of the term, not the often substituted definition we should be using for the word pathetic ever since someone decided the word pathetic meant weak (which it doesn't). This isn't just a zombie story, as you have said many times: it's a story about harsh situations, survival, and change. That may have been the last literary brain cell I had left, and I spent it on you. I hope you're happy. When I end up in the nursing home with nothing more than a smile on my face, remember that you, among other greats, helped me keep that smile. But as I said, Donna was my grandmother in every way... I don't look for my own grandmother to realize anything significant or to be less judgmental of people until shortly before the end. The only difference between the two is that my grandmother won't have her face eaten off by a zombie as her farewell (I hope).

I'm running out of steam fast, and I had so much more to say. I think I'll save it for after I get into the new story arc involving the prison (well, new to me anyway... I look to be caught up with the series by tomorrow). A couple things before I go:

I read this whole letter. I swear I didn't just skip to the questions.

1) Is self-publishing comics really that crazy? I have dreams, but I think I'm in denial.

It's tough... but it's probably the most efficient way to get into comics from my experience. It also puts you in control of your own career, as opposed to pitching stuff and hoping someone else will give you your big break.

2) After the disappointment brought by the remake of Dawn of the Dead (exactly how does a zombie with no legs get into rafters so he can jump down on your shoulders anyway?) and the subsequent delight of Land of the Dead, I would jump at seeing a television series based on TWD. Any plans? (although this question may answer itself as I read on)

No plans right now. I'm all for it, though.

Consider me on board for everything, for when there is no more room in Hell... the Kirkman fans will walk the earth.

(Isn't that better than ending my letter as "The Grateful Dead?" That would have been a hideous pun.)

Aaron Conway

I would have preferred the Grateful Dead reference... maybe.

Dear Funky kirkman,

Hi there, first time writing to a comic yada. yada, yada. I'm just writing to say what a bloody fantastic series the walking dead is. Like many people that have written in I stopped reading comics in my early teens, deeming them childish, but after getting my uncle's old Hellboy comics a while ago I found a copy of the walking dead issue 12 among them. Needless to say I got hooked right away and haven't missed an issue yet and have already ordered my copy of the hardcover collection.

And here comes the stupid question portion.

1. Are they gonna leave the prison soon? (I'm only at issue 24 at the time of writing this)

Some of them will...

2. Why no zombie animals?, c'mon man just 'cus Romero doesn't use them doesn't mean there no less cool.

I don't like zombie animals. All the instances of zombie animals I've seen aren't SLOWER and DUMBER (how I like my zombies) they're vicious and faster... and that just doesn't jive with the rules in this book. I don't think animals can catch the flu or whatever from humans... so why would this be any different?

3. Is Andrew dead now?, or will he come back with some dawn of the dead style bikers /mopagans?

Only time will tell. Odds are... he's dead.

4. Have you ever considered holding a competition were readers send in pictures and the winners are chosen to be zombies in the comic?, that'd rock.

Too much of a headache. I don't have time to do that stuff these days. But Charlie's been drawing famous people as zombies for a few issues now just to see if anyone notices... see if you can spot them. (Which should be easy now that I've let the cat out of the bag--sorry, Charlie.)

5. After finally reading the issue where Shane's body gets up a while ago the thought occured, why didnt Amy get up? Did she and its just being held back for later?

If you'll recall. Andrea shot Amy in the head while she bled to death to put her out of her misery. Destroy the brain... yadda, yadda, yadda.

Well those are my lame fan-boy questions and lastly keep up the good work, man. This is easily my favourite comic and it rekindled my love for the comics industry.

Oh and ,even though shamblers will always have a place near and dear to my heart... most likely chewing on it, fast zombies would be a hell of a lot more scary. But screw the smart zombies there just lame.

And for those Americans who haven't seen it WATCH SHAUN OF THE DEAD! Its freakin' awesome and the second best zombie flick of all time, only bested by dawn of the dead.. or brain dead that rocked to.

We ALL love Shaun of the Dead here, right? We've all seen it already right? Just had to make sure. It's a great movie. I'm anxiously looking forward to the next Wright/Pegg/Frost joint-- HOT FUZZ... should be a blast.

Well that's my 2 cence on the comic, and yo kirkman!, if you love zombies this much check out www.theinfected.co.uk ,there a writer called david moody has written free zombie stories called the "Autumn" saga that is free to download and I'm sure you'd love it.

Later
Danny Smith, merry old England

Oh and p.s, Sabbath rules, just thought id say.

You sure you're from England?

Could the next TPB volume of the Walking Dead get the index of characters that appear in each issue of the monthly series. Plenty has happened, and since the TPB volumes come out in six month intervals, it would be great to have a character index to remind readers who is left at the beginning of the book.

Also, can you have written introductions in future volumes? That is the one thing that I seem to miss that volume 1 had. Perhaps different writers can comment on the series. Better yet, how about getting

George Romero to write up the introduction to volume 5.

I've asked. I know he's read and enjoyed the book... but I think he's too busy for an introduction.

As for the monthly title, I remember reading a letter from somebody wanting a map to show how far the characters have traveled from issue

Jim Dooley

I don't want to over think things. Once you start doing maps and graphs and star charts you just set yourself up for mistakes. It's hard to stay on top of things. I can't reread 30 issues of this book EVERY MONTH to make sure I don't contradict something. I don't have an editor to help keep things straight. I really don't want to start setting things in stone that I'll have to remember every issue. The way around that is to keep things vague. They're in a prison in Georgia. They were in Atlanta. Rick started in Kentucky. Sure, it'd be NEAT to see every road they traveled or every place they stopped, but that would take time and it's really not necessary to the story.

I'll see about putting some extra stuff in the trades but I LIKE the fact that it's just the story. Some character bios probably wouldn't hurt, we just need to make sure we have the space.

Hi Mr Kirkman,

I wrote to you a few weeks ago about possibly doing a short interview. I'm writing a review of the Deluxe edition of Walking Dead for ALL HALLOWS. I'm not looking for lengthy ponderings—just a few sentences. If you've got the time, below are my questions:

I don't usually read these emails until it's time to make a letters column... so the time for this, I'm sure has already passed. Sorry about that... but I'll answer your questions just the same.

1. With the current zombie trend being comedy-horror, what made you choose to do something more serious, something that could have potentially even been unfashionable?

I didn't do this book because of some trend. I had plans to do this book long before 28 Days Later came out. We lucked into being on the cusp of this hot new zombie trend but I did this book solely because I wanted to.

2. With the trade paperbacks already available, why did you decide to publish in the deluxe format?

Frankly? Because I wanted a book like DC's Absolute Editions of my own stuff. I thought it would look cool and make a good Christmas present for folks.

3. Where did the plot come from? Do you know what will happen next or do you let the characters play out their scenarios naturally?

It varies. Sometimes I let the characters run wild and sometimes I have things planned out.

4. Do you pay much attention to those decrying the

series for becoming a soap opera and its lack of hardcore zombie action?

Not really. Most comics are just soap operas in one way or another. I doubt people will consider this arc to be very soap opera-like... but in 10 issues or so, things could quiet down and get back to the kissie stuff. This book will always be changing and morphing as things go on.

5. What has the reception for the Deluxe Edition 1 been like? Will there be a Deluxe Edition 2? And when can we expect it?

Reception has been good. There WILL be a Volume 2. We just have to put out another 24 issues first. So yeah, after issue 48, there will be a volume 2. And for the people who don't want to spend \$100 on the limited edition. There will be small 12-issue hard covers that are not limited and have fewer extras.

Cheers,
Brian J. Showers

Thanks for writing.

Hi guys!

I really love this series! I really do! I buy your comic from a comic shop, here in Athens, Greece. Quite far from your place, uh?

Got №21 recently and I'm waiting for the next ones to come. Ready for my questions? Here we go:

1) Are there zombies in the rest of the world? Europe, let's say (or at least in Athens, even if I never saw one on the streets!)?

That is yet to be revealed. My guess is... probably. The thing is, I doubt our crew will ever make it to Europe and the plan is to stick with them for the duration of this series... so we may never find out.

2) Only living or recently-died people become zombies? What about the people that died before the “plague”?

They wouldn't have been “infected” or “exposed” or however you want to look at it. So no dead bodies crawling up from graves.

Thanks for reading my e-mail. Best wishes to all of you, guys! Keep up the good work!

Apostolis Triamourakis
City of Athens, Greece

P.S. Please try to publish my letter! Thanks in advance.

Done.

P.S.2 I'm dying to see Parthenon full with zombies!!

God would be the one to ask for that.

Dear Letter Hacks,

That was a badass cover. Finding those riot gear suits

was probably my favorite part of the issue. It opens up some cool possibilities. I personally would like it if you could amp up some zombie fighting. The last dozen or so issues are good but a lot slower than the first dozen.

And that's how the series will always be, peaks and valleys. If it's action all the time the action has no impact.

I don't ask stupid questions, by the way. Here are some that went through my noodle:

1) Is Carol maybe a little nuts? She seems... "off".

All signs point to yes... but that remains to be seen.

2) When will we get to meet a mad scientist? I wanna see some "Bub"-type goings on one day.

Who knows what the future holds.

3) What is Rick's favorite fruit? I bet it's apples.

I'm thinking Pears.

4) When will the fans finally get an all-Axel issue? We are dying to know why he went to prison. My guess? Defecating in public.

Armed Robbery. He said as much in his first appearance. I'm toying with the idea of doing issues that focus on one character only. The problem is that'd be more than a YEAR'S worth of issues if I did that.

5) Which character farts the most? I bet it's Dale, the 'ol coot.

Maggie.

6) Prisons tend to get hot hot hot due to their enclosed nature once the warmer months come around. How soon will that generator be up?

Maybe this one is just well ventilated/insulated.

7) Can Lori hurry up and have that damn baby? -Im giving her bitchiness the benefit of the doubt and chalking it up to hormones.

Nine months have to go by first.

8) When will Rick shave? Is Rick really you, oh bearded one?

He'll probably be shaving soon.

Bring on the undead violence! And bring on your buddies' Hector Plasm book.

Sincerely,
Chris Piers

Yes, everyone should run out right now and buy HECTOR PLASM from Image Comics. It's a swell read from BENITO CERENO and NATE BELLEGARDE and some JACOB BAAKE cat helps out with the colors.

Dear Robert

This is my first letter ever to a comic book (seriously!).

For as long as I can remember, I have been addicted to Zombies. Some member of my family had the brilliant idea to give me a VHS copy of Night of the Living Dead as a gift, and the obsession took hold. Since that day, the idea of the walking dead has both intrigued and terrified me. Countless VHS, DVDs, and novels later, the obsession is still raging.

The point of this little rant is to tell you that your comic TWD is perhaps the greatest Zombie tale I have ever had the pleasure of partaking in. The characters are terrific, the story is engaging, and the Zombie action is superb. Issue 25 is no exception! I truly feel drawn in when I read this book. It has become my favorite title by far, and my Fiancee Jenn is also addicted. The characters of Rick, Tyreese, and company have become as dear to me as the characters Flyboy, Roger and Peter.

A few questions, if I may...

1) Will we ever see the "evolution" of the Zombie? I never did care for Bub, or Big Daddy. Yecchhh! Please keep them dumb and clueless?

I don't think zombie evolution is a very realistic aspect of zombie fiction. I know that sounds stupid, but I don't see how DEAD people with rotting parts would slowly become more intelligent. So no, I don't plan on doing that stuff. I think Romero did it well. Bub and the zombies in Land of the Dead are entertaining as all get out. But I don't want to follow ALL of Romero's moves.

2) There must be other bands of survivors. Will we ever see any radio/short wave contact?

We'll certainly be seeing more bands of survivors.

3) It seems that the "Duane Jones" character and his father may be reintroduced. Please tell me that you have no intention of naming other characters "Rhodes/Romero/Savini/Cooper", etc?? It just seems kind of silly (see "the dead next door").

Morgan Jones's son is named Duane. It's not impossible that Duane has a different last name.

4) Will there be any reprints of the first 6 issues? I have the trades, but would love the first 6, even if they are reprints.

No plans right now.

5) If Marvel ever throws a bazillion dollars at you, will you continue to write TWD? PLEASE???

If Marvel were to throw a bazillion dollars at me I'd definitely keep doing this book. Don't worry. That would just make me able to afford doing this book is sales dropped by more than half.

6) Are you ever going to throw in some famous Zombie cameos? I'm thinking of Johnny-killer graveyard Zombie, or Gun-stealing Mall Zombie from Dawn, or perhaps Lucio Fulci's cover boy from "Zombie"?

You don't want me to name characters after actors, but you DO want me to show famous zombies? I'm getting mixed signals here, pal.

7) Could you please kill off a few more characters? With

the exception of Allen, the past few character deaths haven't been very gut- wrenching. Time for a main character to go, perhaps?

Only time will tell.

Thanks for listening, keep knocking my socks off!

Phil Stevens

Sorry to make your feet cold.

Kirkman and crew—
I remember when I was a little kid reading GI Joe & Devil Dinosaur feeling that eventually I'd have to outgrow this love of comic books or risk being viewed as some sort of social reject. Here I am in my 30s and I'm still reading comics and lovin' TWD. Big change is that society has come around and accepted comics, what with the success of Spidey, Sin City, History of Violence and others on screen.

Thank God for that, huh? I'd hate to be seen as a social reject.

The characterization and cliffhangers are what drive WD for me. Take issue 24 for example. The back page shows the cover for ish 25 with riot gear clad storm troopers marching in. I bet a lot of readers (like this one!) expected some group of jackbooted thugs to come storming into the prison (the way Savini and his motorcycle gang roared into Romero's shopping mall), then we get to ish 25 and it's just Rick and Glenn. That issue leaves us with Rick's "It's a helicopter," with both he and Glenn staring up into the sky. But why do I have the feeling ish 26 will show they were looking up at a helipad where a whirlybird is at rest?

Fooled you.

In closing, if I could indulge one cross over fantasy: get with Tim Truman and bring Monday the Eliminator into the story. Last we saw him in Scout, the big guy was "sittin' on top of the world" in a space station with nuclear capability, threatening to end humanity should the humans not cut their crap on earth. WD rules! Keep it going strong,

Tony Monchinski

Thanks for the suggestion but I'm not familiar with that character.

Blah.

Sorry, guys. I've got to say it: Blah. "The Walking Dead" has gone Blah.

Y'all lost me somewhere among the whining, wailing, arguing, and/or ranting. The endless talking and melodrama pretty much drove the nail in the head of the zombie for me several issues ago. I kept hoping something interesting would happen, but it hasn't.

You came close with the cover of Issue 25. I'd sworn off, but decided to give it another try. My bad.

In Issue 26 I predict the helicopter will be sitting empty in the parking lot and that it will cause a 12 page hysterical argument between the survivors about the dangers of having a helicopter sitting around. One of the kids will have a near miss accident that will serve to heighten the outrage felt by one or more adults. Then they'll have a group hug and get ready for the following issue.

Do I get an apology now that you've been proven wrong?

In Issue 27, someone will burn spaghetti and all the couples will have a huge argument that doesn't make any sense. The women will definitely be upset that the men aren't "protecting" them (Come on, guys, get with the 21st century! I know two female readers you lost with that one.) from the ravages of bad cooking. Someone will try to prove how sensitive they are by going out and blowing up the abandoned helicopter from Issue 26. They'll kill someone in the process and look abashed, leading to more yelling in the next issue.

In Issue 28...ah, forget it. At least two people will start yelling at each other, and someone else will step in to be the voice of reason, leading to resentment and feelings of inadequacy on someone else's part.

There's more to drama than arguing, yelling, and marital infidelity. There's more to horror than debating group norms and trying to decide who is in charge. Sorry, guys, but that's the truth.

I agree. And there's certainly more to this book than that as well.

"The Walking Dead" is turning into something like Peyton Place of the Living Dead but without the Living Dead; like Survival Horror without the Survival or the Horror. Right now "The Walking Dead" is about as entertaining as "My Dinner with Andre" (i.e. it ain't).

I know it's not an easy job to write, draw, ink, edit, and publish these things, so I'm not saying criticizing your abilities, talent, or creativity. I just think that the story is stuck in a very deep, boring, and seemingly endless rut. I'm not saying that's a bad kind of thing - I'm just saying it's not my kind of thing. If the rest of the audience enjoys the gabbing, yelling, and sitting around, that's cool.

But, as things currently stand, I'm not planning on buying any more issues unless the story gets a lot better. That'll take more than vague hints and promises in the letters section of the comic.

I keep hoping y'all can turn it around and do wish you the best of luck in doing so. Sorry - I really want to support your efforts, but I'm cutting "The Walking Dead" loose for now.

Good luck!

WDR

I don't fault anyone for dropping the book. If you're not liking it, you're not liking it. I disagree with your criticisms and hope that if you do find your way back here, you'll see that you really missed the mark on the future of the book.

I decided to go back and read the series from issue №1, and I noticed something that could not be ignored. Now before I say this I want to let you know I am not really one to be nit-picky like “trekkies” who get mad because the guy goes through a door that should lead to the bridge but the person is in engineering, those things don’t bother me. I was reading issue five were Amy dies in Andreas arms then when the artist changed apparently Amy came back from the dead and took her sisters place in life. It is not some small detail that makes them look different. Adlard is drawing the wrong girl. It is painfully obvious and I almost wish I had not noticed because this is going to drive me crazy now. I know it is probably too late to correct but just to acknowledge it would help. Loved the book since issue one keep up the great work!

Mustache MacDonald

Charlie’s rendition of Andrea looks more like Tony’s rendition of her than of Amy. Charlie makes the freckles more pronounced, but I think that’s a good way to make sure she doesn’t look like Carol. In any case, Charlie has drawn Andrea FAR more than Tony ever did... so you should be used to it by now.

If this gets published, it’ll be my third letter posted in TWD. *(congrats)*

Last time you let me plug both my website and local comic book shop so thanks for that. I just want to say that I hate you. *(wasn’t expecting that)* I picked up marvel zombies (I hate talking zombies, I mentioned it in my first e-mail to TWD) but you actually made me enjoy it. It’s a great read. Damn you.

I also picked up the Invincible trades, which I adore, anyone who likes a super hero book should without a doubt pick it up. Everything is spot on. So I had to pick up the Marvel-team up with Invincible in it. Which led to buying the trades of MTU and monthly. Luckily I was already buying Ultimate X-men.

Anything you write is solid gold man. *(that turned out better than I expected)*

Finally this Wednesday I saw the hardcover. Held it in my hands, and with little hesitating bought it.

Thankfully it is everything that it’s cracked up to be and more. It was my first ultimate hardcover edition and was worth every penny.

So, aside from being poor, I truly enjoy your work, and find you’re a stand up guy for both acknowledging your fans (hell man look at the size of the letter column), and not letting your talents go to your head. (Although I could be wrong and you’re a complete asshole in person but I doubt it) *(the jury’s still out)*

That being said congrats on hitting number 25 I’m happy for everyone involved in the book. I have loved it since I picked it up and will continue to do so. (unless of course the zombies start talking)

I still hate Otis, and love Glenn’s reaction to finding

the riot gear, like a kid in a candy shop. Carol freaks me out, she’s way too love hungry. Axel’s growing on me. I’m sad that Allen died. Tyreese and Rick going at it was great.

You keep writing and I’ll keep reading.

Jon Maggio

Thanks for the kind words, Jon.

Master Kirkman, *(I’m not sure if that’s a typo...)*

Firstly, let me say this, I came across THE WALKING DEAD when the first 3 trades were released. I glanced over the first trade (Days Gone Bye) for about 30 seconds and without reading a single word, I knew I would dig this series. I bought all 3 trades that day. I began reading after work that night, around 8 and did not finish until all 3 books were read. Yes, I liked them that much. I always thought this type of story would do well as a comic book. Cheers to you. I’ve caught up with the monthly releases (just got done reading issue №25)...and even though I have the issues that compose the 4th trade, I still bought it. I’ve gotten 3 of my friends, 2 who are closet comic book lovers and one who isn’t, hooked on The Walking Dead.

I’ve also read a lot of people ‘bashing’ you for not enough zombie action. Keep doing things the way you’re doing them. I don’t think you’d let a series based on flesh eating corpses become a ‘soap opera’. I’m sure you have crazy action in store for us! The past issues have hopefully been the calm before the storm.

Thanks for having a little faith.

Anyways, this is my first fan letter. I’ve been tempted in the past, but never wrote to anyone before...don’t break my heart and not publih this...I’d be syked to see this in an issue. Hell, I’d buy another copy! But after all is said and done, you are crafting a very good series here and like I said before I’m happy you’re taking things slow and not throwing useless action at us. Keep up the excellent work!

Paul Romero (No relation to George A.)

I think it’s necessary for me to say that I do print ALL the negative mail I get. I like negative mail. It’s way more fun to respond to than praise. The thing is, lately I’ve had people, like Russ, the owner of A+ Comics in Lexington, Kentucky comment about the “harsh beating” I’m taking in the letters column. I don’t want people to think folks in general aren’t digging this book. Sales are still going up (knock on wood) and reviews are still good, word of mouth is positive. People obviously like this comic.

I just don’t want people to worry about the book. We’re fine. We’re not going anywhere.

Kirkman!

I have to say, I loved the cover to this issue! I think it may be my favorite yet, and the ad for issue 26 looks

just as good. I think I may actually like Charlie's covers more than Tony's, which I never would have expected. At best, I thought it would be a push...

I think the best part of the cover was how it was totally misleading without showing anything not in the story. I've written in before complaining about things on the cover never happening in the book (i.e. Thomas's execution - you still owe me a hanging!!). This one was a little excessive with the shields and all, but we did see people wearing those suits walking among the zombies. I was convinced the issue was going to include some type of army arrival. I was completely surprised when Glenn found the suits in the prison. Great job!

I'll get right on that hanging.

I also loved the back cover that Cliff did. If Charlie ever needs some time off, I'd LOVE to see an issue drawn by Cliff. I think it would be a great treat based on that one page.

Cliff is indeed a fantastic artist. He'll be handling the full art chores on A book (not THIS book) very soon.

I'm not sure what to think about the helicopter at the end of this issue. If someone in the area had a helicopter, wouldn't the group have seen it before? They've been in the prison for a while now, haven't they? And what are they doing flying around anyway? Are they looking for survivors, or are they looking for somewhere to escape from the craziness of the world? And will it lead to our group moving out of the prison when it seems like they're just getting settled? I suppose all these questions will be answered soon, and I trust that you'll handle it well.

Thanks for a great book!

Jim Amato

Keep reading, Jim. All will be revealed in time.

Zombiemen (Robert, Charlie, Cliff & Russ),

Thanks for putting together a great book. Everyone I've recommended it to has become intoxicated by its strong characterization and Charlie's amazing artwork. Charlie's doing a good job on front covers now and loved Cliff's back cover on the last issue. How about giving Cliff a shot at a front cover? Just a suggestion to take note.

On to more serious questions....

1. Do the zombies have colonies or have any way of grouping together and communicating? (Ok, I just saw Land of the Dead!) heh...

Not that has been revealed.

2. Is the zombie 'virus' communicable? Like by getting zombie blood in an open wound- will you turn?

Probably. It's more of a case of the germs of the zombie killing you than infecting you. Everyone is already infected.

3. We see almost everything from the POV of the

survivors of the plague. Any chance we will get an issue or two where we see the world! from the POV of the zombies?

This is not the first time this has been asked. How would this even work? It would just be shots of the zombies walking around, sitting, whatever. They don't actually DO much you know.

4. We know Rick's backstory, is there any chance we'll get the backstory of any other supporting cast member?

You know the back story on a good number of the characters, some in detail, some not so much in detail. They've all talked about past experiences from time to time.

Refining my questions just a bit, I think a whole issue from POV of the zombies would be kinda lame. Maybe we could get snippets of it. Like during a scene where they are fleeing from the zombie, we could a few panels of things from Rick's POV with him trying to escape and then we could shift over to the zombie's POV of the hunter.

Maybe. Glad you're finally coming around, though.

Even though a good number of the supporting cast become zombie fodder it would be great to see what they're lives were like pre-plague.

But I guess those creative decisions will be left to you if you decide to utilize them.

Regards,
Doug H.

That's RIGHT, dammit.

Mr. Kirkman,

Sounding like a broken record here.....I have been reading comics for roughly 16 years now and I have never seen a better comic than Walking Dead. You have taken what is great about the Romero zombie movies and turned it into a zombie fans wet dream. I jumped on at issue №14, and have proceeded to make my wallet cry by buying all of the back issues, mostly from Ebay. I am recommending this book to everyone I know. What you are creating is pure genius. Keep it up!

-Zach Langlois

PS- If I could throw a shoutout to my LCS? If your ever in Boise, go to Captain Comics!

PPS- Is Glenn's time almost up, he just seems expendable at this point.....break poor Maggie's heart.

Glenn may... MAY just have some fight left in him... we'll have to wait and see.

That's it for this month.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Amanda here, and I'm not going to sugarcoat it, this issue is a very difficult one to get through. The Governor's depravity knows no bounds. There's a deep horror in wondering what every one of those heads must have gone through when they first came to Woodbury, but an even deeper horror seeing how casual and warm the Governor is around the town. It's a horror I'd rather not think too much about, so let's get into these old Letter Hacks.

Welcome to issue 29.

No time for love this month... gotta dive right into the mail.

Here goes!

Hi again, Kirkman!

Just read issue 26... You're seriously starting to piss me off... Here's the list:

1. You show us a helicopter in 25, then I breeze through issue 26 looking forward to finding out who's in the chopper. And at the end of the issue, I'm no closer to an answer! Damn you, Kirkman!!!

I gotta keep the fish on the line, man.

2. More Rathburn back covers?!? You can't keep doing this to me! Rathburn's zombies are so cool that a simple back cover is not enough! If you're going to keep doing this, you're going to have to give Rathburn a fill in issue or a one-shot or something. I can't handle getting this little taste each month and nothing more!

Cliff is working on something non-Walking Dead related right now... he's pretty busy. After that—who knows.

3. That two-page spread between issues 22-23 is a pretty cool idea, even if you did rip it off from Larsen. I didn't even notice it until one of the letters in this issue mentioned it. I went back and checked it out, and it's real cool. But it pisses me off because I know what you're doing, you corporate sell-out. The way it's printed, we can't really see what the full spread looks like without folding a comic in half, which you know most people won't do. Now, you'll print the trade with the spread intact, so we need to buy that to see the whole thing. I guess that's Kirkman - always trying to make a buck for "the man" at the expense of his poor fans...

That's not it at all. It's all an effort for Erik Larsen... he is the publisher at Image now, you know. Although, I will admit... the extra sales don't hurt.

4. It feels like it's been forever since the last issue. You're probably not behind, but you were putting out more than just an issue a month, so I'm getting used to it... Make this book bi-monthly already! I bet you, Charlie, and Cliff are all wasting a third of your day sleeping when you could be writing./drawing/toning! Just get some Red Bull or Rockstar or something, and get your lazy asses back to work! Sleep's overrated anyway (why else would I be writing this at midnight on a Sunday when I have to get to work in the morning?)

We'll do what we can. We have lost a week or two here and there in the schedule... starting in August, we'll be on track, monthly, like clockwork from here on out. And you can quote me on that... until we blow it.

5. I never even noticed the "Previously In..." section on the inside cover... Good thing you mentioned it in the letters or I never would have seen it. Couldn't you make it stand out more so it would actually be useful to me?!?

Or, y'know... you could LOOK at the credits page or something. I can't read the books FOR you, man.

OK, so that's a weak list, but it's better than your normal "the book's great, keep up the good work" letter you usually get, right? Those are just boring...

Tell me about it.

I'm really looking forward to finding out who was in the helicopter and who the group of people were that beat Rick, Michonne, and Glenn to it. It's interesting that another group could have been that close to the prison without ever stumbling upon it... Of course, knowing your writing, it'll probably take months for you to answer those questions, because you just LOVE to piss me off!

Anyway, the book's great. Keep up the good work!

Jim Amato

Thanks. I'm going to get back to pissing you off now. I LOVE IT!

Robert Kirkman,

This letter is more of a double thank you. First let me tell you a little about myself. I'm 26 and I play in a rock-pop band called Spitalfiled. I tour about nine months out of the year and I am never home. So "comic book" Wednesday is a bit difficult for me sometimes. This is where the double thank you comes in. My favorite comic book store, Chicago Comics is two blocks from my apartment in the city. I go there every time I'm home and usually pick up a

couple of trades before I leave for a tour. I brought up Invincible volume 1 and they said it was "amazing" and "you'll be back for two because that's when the shit hits the fan". It was their recommendation and high praise for you that convinced me to pick it up. Well, an hour later I was back. While I was picking up number two they told me of your other works including The Walking Dead. A week later I find myself owning all volumes of Invincible and The Walking Dead. So Kudos to those guys at Chicago Comics.

Indeed—thanks bunches, guys.

Second thank you goes to you and all working on this book. What a character you have in that Rick Grimes. I mean the transition that he has gone through since issue one. You can see it on his face, the way he walks and talks. With the work of Moore/Adlard and your stories, man his guy has substance. Too many times I find that the characters in some of the books I am reading, stay the same while only their situations and surroundings change. That is not the case here. And that's why I'm writing this to you and everyone that works on The Walking Dead. To tell you the truth I never ever thought about writing a letter to the editor, or creator of my favorite books until today. So again THANK YOU Chicago Comics and THANK YOU Robert Kirkman.

Newly acquired fan of your work,
Tj

No, thank you.

Hey Mr. Kirkman,

Hello and best wishes. About two months ago I read Invincible #1 and the Walking Dead through the Image site's digital comic format. I really liked them and had to find out what happened next. (Their ploy worked on me) Anyway, so I went straight to Amazon and bought the hardback collection volume one of Invincible and the 1st TPB of TWD. Wow! This pretty much blew my mind. So I went and bought up the back issues of Invincible and the rest of the TPB's of TWD and am now current.

They just saw the helicopter.

The problem is, now that I'm up to date, I have to wait month by month to get these little single issue tidbits. This sucks. I think this qualifies as an addiction. You see, I am a doctor and I have been sneaking into the call room at the hospital to read these things. I've been getting them in the mail, sneakily hiding them from my wife so she doesn't know that I'm spending money on this stuff. (sounds similar to a dope problem, huh). Funny thing, I've bought two of TWD trades at Barnes & Nobles and each time the check out person said something like "Good choice. This stuff is great!"

Bottom line; I'm writing this to wish you congratulations on making a living doing something you like and that a lot of other people really like. Not everyone is that lucky. Also, as your career moves forward into bigger \$ projects, I hope you don't completely leave this format behind. Another thing.

When the movies start coming, keep complete creative control. Don't let them water your stuff down. I can't wait to see them.

Another fan,
Jason

Yeah, sorry you have to put up with the monthly grind now. That's just the nature of the business.

As far as abandoning this book goes... all I have EVER wanted to do since I was like... ten years old is work in comics. All I've EVER wanted to do since I started working in comics is have LONG runs on books, getting to tell broad, over-arching story arcs... and getting to stay on a book for years and tell a full story.

So now that I have that with Invincible and The Walking Dead... I'm not going ANYWHERE. I want to see both books reach at least 100... but I've got no plans to go anywhere on either book after that.

Mr. Kirkman,

Thanks for proving my theory. I've long held the contention that zombies make everything better. Be it video games, movies, or comic books, I see few things that couldn't be improved by the living dead. Bored with Super Mario Bros.? Understandable. You wouldn't be bored if you were jumping on the heads of the shuffling undead instead of waddling mushrooms. Movies? How much more enjoyable would Titanic have been if Leo DeCap would have come back from his watery grave to feast on the brainpan of his darling Rose?

I like the cut of your jib, fella.

Now, in the midst of a cultural zombie revival, I find myself increasingly impatient for the next issue to come out. Thanks for that. It's the ongoing zombie saga that could never be provided by any other medium. It's not a Nintendo game, it's not a movie, it's my comic collection that's been vastly improved by the presence of zombies. And specifically, the batch that you've cooked up and the lives you've shown us that have been affected by them. There are other books with zombies in them on the shelf, but your team has created a new standard for the undead. Congratulations, and thanks again.

Loyally yours,
Gavin Napier

Thanks for writing.

Dear Kirkman,

Holy crap. Issue 26 is the issue I've been waiting for and there's more to come. Helicopters crashing, random zombie attacks, polygamy, soap opera goodness.

Woo-hoo. I love it when I can't predict what's going to happen. Never thought Carol would ask to marry Rick and Lori. Good times. Got the whole Lost thing going with the others in the area. Feel like I should

say more, but you need that space in the back to plug your other books, make fun of Bendis, and print those bios... Heh. Oh, and I spilled water all over this comic and the back page fused with my Tommy Boy DVD box. Just thought I should share that.

Questions:

1. Ok, I convinced you to put up Invincible for a Heroclix set. Now how about The Walking Dead for Horrorclix?

We'll see.

2. I've been selling people the Invincible trades, but there are no letters. Bendis includes some letters in his Powers trades. You are better than Bendis, right?

Yes, I'm MUCH better than Bendis. That's why I put stuff you actually want to SEE in the trades instead of mountains of ego stroking letters you'll never read. I swear... that Bendis... he was so much better before he cut his hair.

3. Romero might be making a sequel. What do you think? What would you like to see?

A direct continuation from Land of the Dead. I'm looking forward to it.

4. Have you seen Dead and Breakfast? Such a great movie. Has zombies, but not the Romero breed. Good stuff. They do Thriller.

Not yet... maybe some day.

5. Zombie Gorillas? Already been done. The band Gorillaz rocks. They begin their newest album with music from Dawn of the Dead. A song from another album is nothing but Dead film sound bites.

That's right.

6. Did you know that when you have a tickle in your throat, scratching your ear to cause small throat spasms makes it better?

I'll certainly try that next time.

I'm pumped with the new direction in this book and Invincible. Tellin you man, Walking Dead Horrorclix. Chance to kill Allen all over again. Looking forward to the new MTU stuff as well. Haven't read Ultimate X-Men, but I promised you I would. I'll tell you what I think.

Kirkmaniac,
Chris Pitts

You better get on that Ultimate X-Men bandwagon soon--that book NEEDS the readers!

Mr. Kirkman,

Issue 27. Dear God, where do I start? I have been reading TWD since issue No1. Many times your book has made my jaw drop, but nothing can compare to the last page of No27. I actually yelled "Holy !@No\$\$"! which made my dog jump about 20 feet!

Really? You shoulda really screamed at the end of 28.

How will Rick handle this situation? Something tells me that all three of them don't make it out in one piece. Michonne looks to be able to take care of herself, but is Glen up to the task? It also was a nice touch to see that the 3 of them were smart enough not to divulge the prison camp. Will the truth slip out? Much as I would like to see a Living vs Living battle, I'm not sure I want to see the prison survivors go against what appears to be a professional army.

This book continues to get better every month. It is great to finally get some new characters, and we will hopefully get to see what/how they have survived. The last page was actually terrifying to me! Dr Logan and Millard Roush would definitely approve!

This is without a doubt the best title on the market right now. The dialogue is believable, and the story is really starting to pick up speed now. I have tried to get others aboard the TWD, and my fiancé Jenn is absolutely nuts about this book as well.

Have you had a chance to check out "Escape from the living dead?" It's not as bad as I thought it would be, and miles better than "Toe Tags" by Romero. My local shop, Harrison's in Salem, Massachusetts, has a whole wall devoted to horror comics right now, but they tell me that TWD is without a doubt the best selling title right now. It's always good to see a true fan make good, Robert!

I haven't checked that book out... I'll probably buy the TPB.

Marvel Zombies kicks all kind of ass also, but TWD is still my favorite. Please, no matter what the "Big guys" offer you, please keep writing this one, please???

Until next time,
Phil Stevens

Read what I said above. I'm not going anywhere. And neither are Charlie or Cliff as far as I know.

Dear Walking Dead team,

I stopped buying comics when I was fourteen years old. Ghost Rider started to suck, I discovered girls, and started going to lollapalooza. I hadn't really thought too much about comics for the past twelve years except when I had to lug the shoeboxes full of them that I still had every single time I moved. Even then, everytime the thought was "damn, I really need to get rid of these things." Things changed at the beginning of last summer. I was getting tattooed for nine hours in two days, and as exciting as my tattoo artist is to talk to it got just a little tiring. While hunched over with a needle jabbing into my back for hours on end I noticed a book on his cluttered shelf of art- books in front of me titled The Walking Dead. As he and I are both horror movie fanatics I knew that it would be interesting, although I must say I was skeptical because it was in comic form (Ghost Rider really disappointed me by issue 26; deep scar.)

Well now here it is nine months later and that first trade has given a (re)birth to an old habit.

I am a full-fledged comic book nerd once again. The book blew me away immediately as a literary accomplishment and a comic. It made me ask Lance (the tattoo artist) if other comics were out there as good. He said "I'll bring you the other two trades tomorrow." After I devoured those I immediately went out to my local comic shop and pestered the owner into telling me other books that were as good as yours. Of course Walking Dead and Invincible are my two favorites that he recommended but I'm a big fan of Brian Vaughn's work and Rick Remender. It's sad that Tony Moore had to leave you but the guy's doing amazing things with Fear Agent and also Exterminators. *(I agree... and I love working with Charlie, so it was all for the better.)*

Anyway, I'm rambling but I JUST finished, like minutes ago, issue 27 and I must say it's my favorite issue in a while. I was a little disappointed that 25 didn't get the special treatment Invincible got for its 25, but this one makes up for it in the ohmigod I have to know what's happening next dept. I have three comments/questions:

1) Why weren't Rick, Glen, and Michonne concerned with finding any markings on the helicopter? They were curious about it being military or television etc... as it was flying, but no mention of its origin was posed when they reached the crash site, don't know why this bugs me so much, but...you know?

Uh... they were distracted by the footprints? I suck as a writer? Pick one.

2) Glad to see the arrival of the inevitable "outsiders" that would have to ruin everything great that has been achieved (although the definition of great would have to be stretched) a'la the bikers of Dawn, or the rednecks of Night, the soldiers of 28 days...(sorry to bring that movie up) I keep expecting Andrew to pop back up since his swift departure after Dexter's death. Not that this plot development is derivative at all, it's exciting and seems to serve as a way for the characters to realize that the world that has been destroyed might have been destroyed for a reason, people are bastards.

The new group will add a lot to the book. Fun and interesting times are ahead.

3) I don't think I've laughed harder in a long time than at your responses to the letters in 27 about poo eating zombies or "what would happen if a human bit a zombie" debate, wow if you printed those letters I'll feel lame if I don't see mine (wink wink.)

It's taken care of.

To wrap it up, thanks a lot for getting me into comics again, though my wallet is crying for mercy, especially after buying that hardcover deluxe madness, keep up the fantastic work. It depresses me that you are only 27 (my age) I am a lazy lazy person.

Thanks.
Adam Mitchell.

Don't feel bad. I'm sure I'll probably die before you do with all this stress I put myself through. You'll win in the end. You'll see.

Kirkman!

Woot! I'm so excited! You wrote "Charlie's in for the long haul!!! Hoorah! I love the long haul! The best comics are when the writer and artist stay on for a few years. I felt reluctant about TWD until the third trade came out. Didn't want to invest in a story just to see it pawned off to hired writers. I cut you some slack though, I held off of Savage Dragon until issue 75 before I started buying it.

Is that the theme of this issue? I'M NOT GOING TO QUIT. NO ONE OTHER THAN ME WILL EVER WRITE THIS BOOK... until I totally sell out. But seriously, I don't plan to ever leave. The book will be cancelled long before I feel like letting someone else write it.

Ooh speaking of! I've an idea, y'know how Larsen is on like issue one-hundred twenty-something of Savage Dragon? If he keeps going at his pace, and you keep going at yours you could totally beat him to issue 200! That would be AWESOME! You should bet him some money on that!

I would love to do that. Just to stick to old baldy (that's what we call him around the Image office). I tell you what... I'll give it a shot.

I want you to know how much I appreciate how well you manage to balance the book. Sometimes sci-fi/fantasy/horror starts off with so many ideas and then disappoints by failing to deliver on them. You've done a masterful job of pulling in the reins to keep it interesting and yet containable.

Your reader until you stop,
Mahdroo McCaleb

P.S. I was horror struck when Michonne said "when we get to wherever it is we're going...it's just a matter of time before they catch up to us and the longer our trip the more there will be." That made me imagine Atlanta's millions of zombies surrounding the prison. The thought of vast herds of zombies sweeping the country side was terrifying (is that what the people in the Helicopter were looking at?)

Only time will tell!

First off, I work at Wal-mart and I freaking love that there is a shot of one in the background in issue №27! LOVE IT! Sometimes I feel like we're all zombies working there! Anyway, no entertainment means feeding strangers to zombies? That's really messed up!!! Love the book and thanks again to the whole team that works on it!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

I worked at Wal-Mart in high school. Tony Moore worked in the Wal-Mart pharmacy (same Wal-Mart) shortly after high school. Wal-Mart REPRESENT! I don't think Charlie or Cliff ever worked in a Wal-Mart.

Kirkman,

Not much to say that isn't usually said in over 7 pages of fun mail (I READ EM)! Likewise my first time I HAVE ever written in EVER to anything. I started on the Walking Dead late in it's existence, my first issue being №19 where we are introduced to Michonne. Crazy issue to jump into but best \$3.70 CANADIAN I ever spent. Didn't bother with the trades at the time because rumour was swirling of the massive 24 issue hardcover (shout-outs to Darryl at Cyber City in Toronto, Ontario, who gave it to me for American Cover! Customer 4 life!). When the omnibus arrived I spent that entire Wednesday reading the goddamn thing and there is nothing I can say that hasn't been said aside keep 'em coming. But wow the wait between 25 and 26 seemed like years. What was the actual wait period? Seemed longer then the wait between Ultimates 9 and 10! But looks like your getting back on track with 2 issues coming out monthly twice in the next 3 months! Now on to the customary questions:

1.) Carol seems about to crack. Is she really that lost without a man that she'd be willing to go into a 3 some marriage? Maybe its a clever scheme so she has an excuse to get it on with Rick and not feel guilty about pulling a Tyreese on Lori's ass.

We'll see. She's pretty nutty these days. I don't think it's just because she doesn't have a man, though.

2.) I've heard a big change is coming in the next few issues. Is the big change going to involve Lori's baby? With new characters coming out of issue 27 I can see how no one has thought about it yet but if something is wrong with Lori's baby I can see a rift forming between Rick and Lori with Carol in the middle.

The baby is coming... but not just yet.

3.) What do zombies do for entertainment when there aren't any humans around to munch on?

Racquet ball.

4.) Last but not least ATTEND A TORONTO CON! We got 2 coming up here April 23rd and 28-30th. I want you to sign my Walking Dead Omnibus. Plus we got lots of donut shops everywhere! I'll bring you a dozen. Just print me a list of your favorites.

I'm sure I'll make it to Canada eventually.

Hope you print this letter and you need to take over Ultimate Spider-man. I'll be waiting for that day! Zombie King Kirkman, fan for life here.

Sincerely,
Mike Somma (To many fucking Mike's. Needa name change).

Bendis is scared of what I'll do with that book. He doesn't want me to make him look bad. Some day, though... some day...

Kirkmanotron!

You've really shaken things up with the introduction of the second "haven", and in a nicely unexpected way.

I can't wait to see where things go from here, and the sense that the "Governor" and his boys are going to screw everything up for our favourite survivors is hard to shake. Even if they never find out about the prison, the tension is always going to be there, knowing that they're just down the road.

Speaking of which, surely someone in the town knows about the prison, seeing as it's within easy traveling distance? Or did they last check on it before Rick and the gang moved in?

The group in Woodbury is very large... some people don't even know others. Also, Governor is not exactly making it public knowledge how they're getting their supplies. Not everyone in the camp is a rotten person. Also, most of the people in town aren't from that specific area of Georgia.

If I moved 40 miles South in Kentucky... where I have lived all my life. I would have NO IDEA what was five miles in any direction without doing some serious exploring... and that would take resources I might not have.

Also, the little chat with Lori highlighted some interesting questions about morality and the like, beyond the "kill or be killed" stuff the men folk are always going on about. I wonder if you'll be delving into similar questions about what's right and what's wrong with the Governor and his enclave. It would be a shame, I think, to take the easy route and broadly portray them as cackling villains.

Another great issue, Mr K.
Keep it up!

I'm trying to make the "villains" of this book as three dimensional as possible. Let me know if I succeed.

Mr Kirkman,

I just want to say thank you. You rock man. The Walking Dead is my favorite comic book. You make me dream! So here are a few questions, after reading The Walking Dead 27:

1) Do you have an idea of how the story will end? I mean is it a happy end?

I do have a rough idea... I'd rather not say if it's happy or sad.

2) Will we see Duane and his son again (beside the Holiday Special)?

We'll see. They're still out there somewhere... but it's a big world.

3) D'you think the characters will travel outside the US?

Probably not. That would be hard to do given where they are geographically.

4) I want to know what happened to Tyreese when he was in the basketball field! How did he survive? And will we know what is going on in his head since his daughter died?

He went crazy and killed a shit load of zombies, almost in a trance due to the stress he was going through. It could happen, these things are slow and are probably not well balanced. The odds were against him... but it's not impossible that anyone could do that if they were in good shape and had the temperament to do what he did. We'll be hearing more from Tyreese as we go on... he's got a lot on his mind.

Thanks for everything! Hope you'll stay with the book till the end!
Francois

Please print me, print me, i'm so okay with that!

Your wish is my command.

Just wanted to compliment you on a story that not only delivers characters that you care about but also the action and of course horror that work very nicely instead of just overloading the reader on gore and violence as a sole means to keep them interested, and to all the people that think nothing but shoeless hicks come out of Kentucky you have once again proved them wrong. It's all around a great story and can't wait until the next issue.

Jonathan Poole

Have you SEEN me? If I don't qualify as a "shoeless hick" I don't know WHO does!

Dear Kirkman, Adlard & Rathburn,

Bravo, my friends, THE WALKING DEAD is now back on track. I just read and re-read that final page in issue 27 and it STILL scares the hell out of me. Wow! I can't remember the last time I've felt so anxious to read the next issue of TWD. Psycho modern-day savages vs. our heroes vs. the zombies? This is gonna be harrowing (but fun).

Peaks and valleys people. This book will always have slower character driven issues from time to time... that's the design of the book. To have four slow issues of character development and to think the book has "gone off track" is insane. You've got to care about these guys before their guts get ripped out.

Cheers,
Dann Lennard Sydney, Australia

P.S. Kirkman, are you reading all the zombie anthologies being put out by BOOM? They're pretty entertaining.

I've read a couple. They're not bad.

P.P.S. I've particularly enjoyed the past two issues where you've interspersed the main storyline with the ongoing soap opera sub-plots in the prison. Nice one, fellas. :D

Thanks.

Dear Kirkman,

What can I say that hasn't already been said? TWD is phenomonal! The combination of your superb writing and Charlie and Cliff's art beats the hell out of just about every comic out there. But everyone already knows these things, I see them all the time on your letters page. Seriously man, I'm running out of ways to kiss your ass. Back to the letters page though, you said in Steve Ball's letter how you love how so many people write in but don't ever read the letters columns. I just wanted to say I'm a devoted fan of reading the letters like that one where that dude wrote in and said some stuff and you said some stuff back. Man, that was gold! I'm still catching up to Invincible and haven't even started on Brit yet, but I'll get there. I do have a question (and it's not even a TWD question, but I'm gonna be a total dick and use up this space while I have it), will you be doing anything for Marvel's upcoming Civil War? It would be make sense for something to be thrown into a MTU issue seeing as how that book is written for the purpose of throwing heroes together, and it's most fun to see them when they don't agree. Thanks for the great stories!

Mike Parks

I'm doing "The Irredeemable Ant-Man" which will spin out of Civil War... otherwise I'll just be watching from the sidelines. Marvel Team-Up is focusing on other stuff during the crossover.

So far the issues I've read of this book have been No1, and No's 24-27. There are some things I wonder if you have ever covered in the endless dialogue of the issues I haven't read:

What do Rick and co. think God is doing about the whole alien zombie thing? Do they ever talk about God at all? For example, "How could God let this happen?!!!"

It's been mentioned briefly. Hershel is religious.

The issue of entertainment was brought up by 'Governor' in issue No27; what DO the regular cast do for entertainment? Besides reading and sleeping around, of course. Somebody must have a deck of cards right? What about food? They live in a prison... what happens when they run out of food? Go traipsing off to the woods to kill some deer??

Probably. Right now the prison is still well stocked with government issue canned goods. They'll be fine for a little while at least... but they WILL run out of food eventually, and this book will show that. That's the fun part of this book for me. We will eventually get around to everything.

And here's an idea. Maybe it's naive, or you've already covered it, but still, here goes: why not just have Rick and his band kill all the zombies—if that's possible, I mean—then repopulate the Earth??? Sure it would take generations, even the killing part, but—ya know?

It is not possible. Zombies outnumber people like 1000 to 1 or so right now... and there are FAR more people alive than we've shown.

At any rate, I do kinda dig this series and have started reading it regularly. I don't even mind the black and

white any more (Rick has brown hair right?). I was fooled by the Governor and co. and their intentions too; at least until the next to the last page. And, gee, "how will they get out of this one??"

Letter Hacks is a bit vague for a letter column, really. Is there such a thing as a Dead Letter?? Sounds familiar. My favorite characters? Michonne...the blonde woman, don't know her name yet, but there are a lot of kids at the prison—how did They survive so long on the outside?? And how long has it BEEN anyway? A few years or more, like in real life?

Cya.

The kids had parents protecting them. You really should pick up the TPBs. I'm not looking this up (I do keep all this stuff written down) but it's been about 8 months since the zombie plague started. It's May or June or so and the "plague" started in October. So not even a year has passed, which is why Lori is still pregnant.

First off, I know a hundred other people have said it before, but I have to thank you for getting me back into comic books. Hell, I can even get my girlfriend to go to Comic Book World to pick up issues for me since I got her addicted to TWD too.

Now, I hate to do this. Especially considering this is my first letter, but when I was reading through the first issues again I came across the part at the farm where the family had all killed each other. Considering what happened to Chris and Julie, why didn't this family turn into zombies? I really don't mean to be a bastard and ask a question like this, but I really had to ask you. Unlike most fan boys, I will not be bothered by it if you just say that you didn't decide that normal dead would turn into zombies until later, and if anyone complains just tell them to shove it.

Anyways thanks for the great comic, keep up the good work.

Chris Johnston

If you'll notice... EVERY SINGLE dead, non-moving body that has appeared in this book since the beginning has had a head injury destroying the brain. That family in particular was shot in the head by the father and then he shot himself. Look again... this was all planned from the beginning.

Dear Crew,

First of all let me get the obligatory "this comic is incredible" out of the way, this comic is incredible. I am a big fan of your writing Kirkman, you don't mind me calling you that, do you? You, your crew, and your comics are a constant topic of conversation between my friends and I. Me, being relatively new to this whole comic world (I've been into it for a year), have never had to face the horrors of waiting for an issue to come out. One reason is that a lot of comics I initially read were in trade form, and another is that I never really "got into" a series like I did until I picked up the Walking Dead.

I really love your stuff, Kirkman. I picked up Invincible and Battle Pope. I wrote a letter to Battle Pope, not

realizing that that series was an old one, and my letter had no chance of making it to print. I felt like an idiot when my veteran comic book friend told me I was an idiot for not realizing that. I digress, Kirkman, I just wanted you to know that I went through a lot of being angry at you as well. I went through all these stages of hating how delayed this book got, one reason is because comic books are really the only silver lining in my lame-ass customer slave existence, and not getting my favorite comic book (along with Invincible) "on time" was not cool to me. I wanted to post on your forum and give you a piece of my mind...but then I realized you must have so much other things going on. You've got a life, just like anybody else, and I have come to peace with the fact that if quality is what you consistently produce, then I can wait. I just wanted to say I was wrong, and I'm sorry for yelling your name every time your books were delayed.

I do apologize for that. We will be shipping on book a month like clockwork from this point on. So those days should be behind us. I do still maintain that the delays this title has suffered have not been that severe... we've should be shipping issue 36 in October and we'll be shipping issue 33. That means we've lost three months in THREE YEARS. But yeah, we'll be doing better now.

As far as a question with where this comic book is going: Is Carl going to go crazy as he grows up? I mean, he's shot a man, zombies, been shot, has threatened to shoot others... and his dad is going slightly off the tilt...what sort of man could Carl become? From a psychologists standpoint, the boy has been through a lot, at the very least he might develop a twitch, but he stays really calm... what's up with that?

Carl has had a rough life... that will affect him as he gets older. And if all goes according to plan he will eventually get older.

Oh yeah, and another thing. I'm pretty poor, as I have a pretty nasty comic buying habit (I was buying back issues of this comic on ebay last month...I couldn't pay rent on time last month because of it...I was thinking with all the referrals I have made to people to read your books, maybe I could get reimbursed :) like maybe with an issue №1 and 2? I know this is a long shot, but as long as I have your ear, I thought I may as well ask. You can send it to (address kept confidential to avoid nutjobs).

I'd love to send you free comics but I just don't have that many lying around these days. I've got to stay well stocked for my grandkids... y'know... the little shits who won't give a damn about comics in 30 years.

P.S. In hopes of proving why my letter should get printed (or at least a part of it) my name is unique and would be a great addition to the letters page, and you don't have too many middle easterners in your letters column (I counted at most 2). Oh yea, just wanted to shout out to my LCS Comicopolis, I love that place.

Pouria Yazdi

Your name is CRAZY!! A welcome addition to the column.

That's it for this issue. See you next month!

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello readers! Amanda here for the big 3-0. For all you who said at the start of this issue, "No! Glenn would never—", how does it feel to have been right all along? Did we REALLY think that Glenn was just going to betray the group like that? Things may have looked a bit dicey for a moment, but for us Glenn fans, we knew. Deep down, we knew. The Governor is up to his usual tricks and leaves us on one hell of a cliffhanger. Next issue we kick off a new story arc, so if you've been snagging Andrei Bressan and Adriano Lucas's mighty stunning connecting covers, this is the last piece collecting #25-30. We'll have a new variant cover artist in next month. See you then!

Hidey Ho, girls and boys! Welcome to ye old letters column!

Maybe I should answer some mail. What do YOU think?

Dear Dead Walkers,
I would love to see something like this in the walking dead.

I had a mind opening experience recently the best place any survivor could go is a mountainous old growth forest type region.

For your information I am a gun owner and I recently took a 2 mile vertical hike up a mountain in full tactical gear wielding an AK47, SKS, and a .22 rifle they are all legal of course and in our party I took the AK hehe it was some good endurance training though it took 5 hours round trip just to hike 2 miles up the mountain slope. Gilded with fallen and rotting trees some of which clog up and impede passage up the mountain to the point you have to walk across a log suspended 12 feet in the air held up by several other fallen logs which may extend over 200 feet.

The point is that the time it takes for a person to reach the summit in an area where there are no roads or trails is far more strenuous on the body for a living and a dead person then the areas the story has taken place in.

Frankly if a couple hundred Roamers tried to catch my ass well trying to walk up the steep mountain forest hills I would more then likely just have to sit back and watch em break there necks because there would be so much stuff they would have to jump and walk over just to get 30 feet up that hill that I pretty much could stand to not fire one shot in the process then there is the matter of how many people lived in the surrounding towns prior to the outbreak.

Even if they did manage to find you they would have to somehow develop the agility to walk across fallen logs and then there is the matter of the rotting logs that they may have to pass over well this whole time they are focusing on getting to the meat which is barreling up the hill at due speed so they would eventually end up breaking their legs, necks etc by the hundreds.

So I think it would stand that a centralization of mountain dwellers would stand to be the more effective solution to survivors at least for people in Southern Washington anyways hehe. Just gets me chuckling trying to picture a hoarde of those Mall Rat wannabes trying to get me up there I'd be more worried about mountain lions, and elk cause those boys are nasty.

Finally I'd like to say your drawings of the AK47 were superb the Stocks especially the folding stock AKs in the comic looked very real. Also despite that AK47s normally fire an ammunition type that's normally not found made in the US some are re-chambered to fire an American made cartridge and the AK47 seldom ever jams making it a practically superb gun to have in this situation. I've put at least 2000 rounds through my AK47 and it still works great and never once has jammed up on me although I clean it vigorously after every 100 rounds. My AK 47 has polymer black hand guard cover and the Stock is a Telescopic to adjust to different lengths so it looks more like an M16 as well as sounds since it fires the .223 remington cartridge so its far less recognizable to the untrained eye.

Thank you
Sincerely
Epave Omorocva

PS I Know some of my sentences are run ons sorry.

After all this gun talk, I thought about making some snide remark about you loving guns a bit too much. But, y'know... after all this gun talk, I decided that probably wasn't the best idea.

Good letter.

Mr. Kirkman,

I'm 27 years old and have never written a fan letter to anybody for ANYTHING before, but after reading "Letter Hacks" in issue №27, I finally felt compelled to do so. Simply put -- TWD is awesome. Undeniably cool. In fact, I think its absolutely the best comic out there today, with your INVINCIBLE being a close second. Impeccable combination of story and art in both books. Congrats, some amazing stuff.

The check's in the mail.

I think you're single-handedly, along with your great staff of artists, making Image Comics cutting edge again. You've brought back the energy and excitement that was there when SPAWN and SAVAGE DRAGON debuted and blew everybody's minds. Also, having discovered you through TWD, I've been baffled to find out how many other books you actually write! Jeez! You're a machine! Currently though, I think TWD and INVINCIBLE are your masterpieces.

You didn't like Jubilee? What about Space Ace?

Having said that, and not wanting to belabor an already much-talked about point, I do want to point out that I think I prefer Tony Moore's jaw-dropping detail to Charlie Adlard's looser-yet-still-very-stylish approach. Of course I think Mr. Adlard is extremely talented and I can understand the pressure you guys have to meet deadlines and such, but sometimes I do long for a bit more refinement. I think the book's story and art were on equal footing back in Tony's day, whereas now I think the writing is kind of the main draw. Not really a complaint, just an observation. Hope it doesn't annoy you.

Not at all. You can still get Tony's work over at Exterminators from DC/Vertigo and the first four issues of Fear Agent from Image. I don't agree with you, I think Charlie is doing a fantastic job (and I'm not alone--Eisner nomination and all) but I don't mind you voicing your opinion.

Okay, I guess that's about it. I don't really want to ask you any crazy zombie trivia questions or try to find out what's gonna happen next cause, well...isn't that kind of ruining the surprise? I kind of don't get why people ask that kind of stuff.

Oh shit, wait...I DO have two stupid questions!!

1. If a zombie bit somebody who was smoking weed, would the zombie get stoned? Would the THC be able to do any damage to their already messed up zombie brains?

Actually, if a zombie bites someone who's smoking weed he turns into a toad... until he's kissed by a virgin princess... then he turns into a handsome zombie and she gets genital warts.

2. Have you seen the movie "Grandma's Boy"? It was released in January and kind of came and went pretty quickly. Just wondering cause I directed it and I think you're cool and if you liked it I'd be psyched. If you did see it and hated it -- no hard feelings, I'll still buy your books. If you haven't seen it, it comes out on DVD May 9th. Its basically about video games, grandmothers, and marijuana.

Fun for the whole family! Just like your zombie stories!

Best of luck to you sir, please keep up the great work.

Nicholaus Goossen

Heh, really? That's pretty cool. I haven't seen the movie, but I wanted to. I'm a huge Adam Sandler fan, and I was looking forward to seeing the movie that was basically all the guys from his films in a movie by themselves.

Was it any good?

I'll have to check that out. Thanks for writing.

Hey,

Don't know if was intentional, but thanks for the shout out to my hometown of Fayetteville, Georgia on the roadsign in Walking Dead №27. Never thought I'd see it mentioned anywhere in the real world, much less in one of my favorite comic books. It's a shame Rick & company chose Woodbury instead -- Fayetteville definitely would've benefited from the addition of some zombies. Well, besides the ones that already live there and drive SUVs.

Yours,
Josh Hammonds

You can thank the map I referenced for the story to find out what would be where on the street.

Go, Fayetteville.

Hey Mr. Kirkman,

A couple of days after sending you my first fan letter ever, I've been having panic attacks that what I wrote was slightly offensive. I didn't mean to critique Adlard or your book that much. I felt I went a little over the line. Again, I think TWD is the best comic on the planet right now, so....please, don't be pissed or annoyed. Hopefully with all the other letters you get mine will seem tame. I did think my "Can a zombie get stoned?" question was kinda funny though.

Thanks again.
Nicholaus Goossen

No worries, mister Hollywood movie director. I wasn't offended at all. Charlie on the other hand, burnt all his copies of the Grandma's Boy DVD... he owned six copies... he loved that movie... until you wrote your letter.

Hi, Kirkman!

I just finished issue 27. A bit of a slow issue, but clearly building to something more. The governor almost got me thinking he was all right, but something always seemed a bit odd about this new groups, which was finally confirmed on the last page. I don't understand why they would have a bunch of biters around their fighting arena... If it's just people fighting, what's the point of the biters? Maybe we'll see the fight next issue and it'll be more clear... And I really liked how the new people have a different name for the zombies than the rest of the characters. Nice attention to detail there!

I'm trying. I think by now you know why the zombies are there-- to make the fights more intense!

One thing I don't get is how the people in the jail never noticed this town before. If they've been having these fights at night with their big lights on, wouldn't our regular crew in the prison see the glow in the distance and try to go investigate it? With no light anywhere else in the area, I'd think the lights would be easy to see, even from a few miles away...

There are some large, wooded areas in-between

them... and they're about four miles away if I recall... it's feasible they didn't see them.

I guess I don't have much to say this time, but thanks for another nice issue. Seems like we should get some nice action in the next couple issues when Tyreese and the rest try to find out what happened to Rick, Michonne, and Glenn.

Jim Amato

I hope we didn't let you down in the action department.

One more thing I forgot... I'm amazed at how many people seem to not read your letters page. Fans are always clamoring for letters to be printed in comics, but when someone finally does it, they don't even read them! I was shocked how many letters you got from people that sounded like they just realized the title of the book wasn't about the zombies after all. How many times did you tell us that in your letters page?!? Well, I for one, read every letter you print! It takes me a hell of a long time, but I really enjoy reading them all.

Thanks,
Jim Amato

Thanks, sometimes I feel like I write these things for NOTHING. I do know a good bit of people read them though... so it's okay.

Mr. Kirkman,

The following is a short list of comments to both you, and the readers of The Walking Dead:

No1) The Walking Dead is the best comics in the market today. Great story, great art, no ads, and no bullshit alt/exclusive covers. It's almost perfect. I will continue to buy and read TWD until its end. Keep up the good work.

No2) The only complaint I have is the about the late TWD books. I know you're a busy man, but you've developed a huge fan following for TWD (myself included) who get very disappointed when an issue arrives on stands weeks after its due. Although I will admit that the wait makes the book twice as satisfying to read, I would still like to see the book get back on schedule as long as there is no quality lost to do so.

We're getting on time, don't worry.

This ones for the readers:

No3) Dear Readers of TWD, STOP

TELLING ROBERT WHAT HE SHOULD/ SHOULDN'T DO IN HIS OWN BOOK! If he wanted suggestions of what to do next, he'd ask. Go write your own fucking book. If Robert wants them to stay in the prison, then they're staying in the prison. If Robert doesn't want zombie animals, then there's not going to be any. If Robert doesn't want to reveal how the zombie virus started, then its never going to be revealed. If Robert doesn't want Duane and Morgan to show up again, then they will never show up. Robert has done an excellent job on this book WITHOUT your help, so lets let him continue. Just read the damn book and enjoy it.

Here is one (possibly dumb) question:

№4) How far ahead do you have TWD written? Up to issue 36? 50? 250?

Thus ends my list. Please be so kind as to print this letter in a future issue.

Thanks,
JAKEtheSNAKE

I'm usually barely an issue ahead of Charlie script wise. Over the next year I'm going to try to get a little further ahead. I've got the book plotted FAR past that... but scripting... I'm writing 35 when he finishes 34 and so on.

Well, I'm trying to send an email to you to see if I'm any more successful in getting it printed than the hand written one that I sent to you that took a long time to write. Maybe I shoudln't have bashed bendis in that letter after all, jeez I didn't know he was your buddy.

You kidding? I HATE Bendis.

I've stated here before that I don't have an intern or anything and I DO NOT have time to retype handwritten or typed mailed-in fan letters... so I just don't print them. I read them... but I just don't have the resources to print them. Thanks for emailing this one.

Anyway, I'm loving this current arc of the series very much. It was afraid Glenn (who by far is the most likeable character in the book) was gonna bite it at any moment. The tension was palpable. Please don't kill him, please! And can't wait to see if they force rick or glenn to fight the zombies in their swat outfit! Poor guys.

Only time will tell.

So, I'm loving the book, and loved what you did with Marvel Zombies. Great covers, great art,

great ending! Man this was a great story for you. A friend of mine suggested that it could have been three issues, but I disagree. Just right amount of length, and that ending was totally awesome. Which was your favorite cover so far? I can't wait to get that FF №1 cover.

My favorite was the X-Men #1 cover. That book had my favorite ending that I've written... I was really proud of how I ended that mini. Some people didn't like the ending... and I think those people have no SOUL.

After picking that up, I decided to finally read invincible and bought the hardcover to volume 1. Awesome. Love it, especially Atom Eve. Please get Clay Moore to do a sculpt of her (oh, and I'm extremely excited about him doing a walking dead statue, made my day). I'm already committed to buying that awesome Invincible statue. And then I went out and bought Marvel Team Up vol 1 tbp. Good clean fun. Yeah, not the greatest stuff, but I liked it, and will pick up the rest. Now all I gotta do is pick up Marvel Knights 2099 trade, and didn't you do FF: Foes?

Yes, I did all that stuff. Thanks for the purchases.

Finally, please let us know before hand about anything like the Image Holiday Special story. I had no clue you had a walking dead story, and need to buy it now. I bought the Deluxe hardcover and been loving it man. Great way to read it in extra large pages.

I'm SURE I mentioned that in the letters column. How ELSE would I let you know? You guys really should read this stuff... I can't just call you at home, not ALL of you at least.

Thanks for some great stories, Robert, and I gotta say the Walking Dead is my favorite series of all. Thanks to you I started buying comics again.

Michael
Dallas, TX

Thanks man, it's good to have you.

Letter Hacks,

Zombies, but then, that's not really what the book is about is it? That's just the setting, that's part of the pitch. It allows the human psyche to be examined, for a bunch of chit chat and human drama. But hey, it's cool, there's zombies!

Did I mention Kirkman sucks? No, must have been a letter to Invincible. Hadn't written any

letters in a while, the books have been too damn good. Changes in artistic teams didn't matter, Kirkman's stories were just too good. And heck, the new artists rock. Yes they do. And Kirkman doesn't suck at all!

But specifically, Walking Dead. The book is consistent, the drama feels very real and you get lost in the book during the time you are reading an issue. It's kind of disappointing when, having read it, you look at your pile of comics (if you're lucky to have that many GOOD comics) and know that there's nothing in the batch like it.

Sure there are plenty of comics aping Bendis and having the characters yap more than they do anything else, but that's not what Walking Dead is about. You just don't get the same satisfaction anywhere else.

There's always action and what's different is that you see the characters often at a loss as to what to do next. That decision is an important one given their predicament. And it's always given to us straight as they - like we would - try to figure out solutions given the resources at hand and the risk to them.

What a cool, often deep read.

Regards,
Thad Branco

Thanks for the kind words.

Dear Robert,
I love your book and I believe in one of your letter pages you wrote that Charlie sold some of the pages of original art. I was just wondering if he has some to sell or if he sells them through a website of some sort. I'm trying not to be picky, but I would love to have one of them with Rick and a zombie on one and they wouldn't have to be on the same panel necessary. There's no rush I know your busy writing all of those books, so whenever you get time to find out or tell Charlie to contact me. I would appreciate it.

Thank You for your time
Cary Shenk

Charlie Adlard's original art can be purchased at WWW.SPLASHPAGEART.COM at some fairly reasonable prices.

Hey,

Just finished reading issue 27. Quite a lot happening there. One thing did bother me

though. Why doesn't Rick, Michonne, or even Glenn say "Hey, what if these people aren't friendly? Maybe we shouldn't be chasing after them.." When they meet these people, I half expected one of them to just start spilling everything about their camp at the prison, which fortunately Michonne was smart enough to head that off. This kind of makes me wonder though if any of these people ever watched a zombie movie themselves.

I don't recall any of them ever referencing any. If I were a survivor in a zombie situation I would often be saying things like "This is what they did in Dawn of the Dead." or "Hey, a guy got himself killed like that in 28 days later."

How crappy would this comic be if someone said "Let's be careful, this never worked in Dawn of the Dead." I mean REALLY? So no, nobody in this book has seen a zombie movie, or at least... they don't comment on it. If you were lost in the woods, chased by bears... and you came upon a cabin with smoke coming out of the top, you'd beat on the door and ask for help, glad that you've encountered another human. Is that SAFE? No, but I think 90% of us would just want that human contact and wouldn't really think about the dangers. Same thing here. They haven't encountered any evil humans yet. By nature we do seem to band together in times of great tragedy. It's only natural that what we, from the outside, view as naïve and optimistic is really just human nature.

NEXT time, though... they'll be a little weary of any new humans they encounter—if they survive this one.

Anyways, so I expect Tyreese will be leading some sort of rescue mission in future issues...? I'll be excited to see what happens next. I was worried things were going to get real dull in the prison, though they never really did. The riot suits were a nice touch.

Tyreese went out on his own, for reasons that are yet to be revealed.

BTW, I wrote you guys note once before and you published it. So this is actually not my first time writing to a comic book. It's my second.. and I do not think I am the Greg T. you think I am, but hey s'ok.

Greg T.

How many Greg Thompson's could there be?

That's it for this month. See you all back here in 30 days or less.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hey there, readers! Amanda here and welcome back to another new edition of Letters Hacks which coincides with the start of our next story arc. The world of TWD definitely got more threatening over the last six issues – I hope that's not an ill omen to start our new year with. But a good omen is the set of Mike Del Mundo variant covers that will be paired up with this arc, going bright and bold on colors. See if you can spot them in the wild. Even though you'll be reading this in 2022, we're answering the last of the questions from 2021 here. Thanks for writing in this year, it's been a delight for me to hop on board.

Look at us... reaching out into the future... from the PAST!! Woo!

It's been great having you on board, Amanda. If only you'd been around to edit the series the first time around... maybe there would have been fewer embarrassing name duplications. Oh, well.

Now let's dive into this fresh hot mail!

Howdy!

I have been reading TWD since the original printing of issue 30 and I never once realized a crucial fact until TWDD №27's Cutting Room Floor. That stone cold fact is that you, Mr. Robert Kirkman, named Rick after yourself! In that Cutting Room Floor you reference the Young RK (yourself, a young Robert Kirkman) and it all makes sense!

RK = RicK

I see (IC) what you have done there! I'm sure I'm way late to the game in realizing this but it's good to know that you will be our great leader once this zombie plague finally hits!

Thanks for all you do!

-Josh Taylor-Fantastic

Josh, you're only just figuring this out now?? We call him Rick in the office all the time.

You're both barking up the wrong tree! Thanks for playing, though.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I was still a toddler when The Walking Dead first started, and I had always grown up hearing such great things about the series.

Okay, Robert grilled me for talking about how young I was reading The Walking Dead, but now you're making me feel old. You're lucky I even grabbed this letter to print...

Do you see how it feels, Amanda?! Do you see?!!

Foolishly, I neglected to pick up the series until now. I thought that this would be an opportune time to start reading the series. I picked up the 26 already released issues of The Walking Dead Deluxe and read through all of them within a week. Now, I am afraid that I will never read a series this good ever again.

Every issue is superb, and these cliffhangers have caused me to stay up into the late hours of the night because nothing can compel me to put the series down. I have accepted the fact that I will not be able to predict anything in this series, but that's what makes each issue so exciting. You don't realize how jealous I am of people who got to start this journey with you in 2003.

I'm not sure how many more times my girlfriend can handle getting woken up late at night by me shouting an expletive while reading this series, but I think she's going to have to adapt. There's no way I'm ever going to shut up about this series, so you're going to get some free advertisement from me until I die.

Michonne is as cool as everyone has said. She has quickly become my favorite character. However, I also really do like everything happening with Lori, and I think she's a really interesting character, so I can't wait to see how her story continues to unfold.

Lori caught a lot of flak in some of the old letters, so I'm here for your read on her character.

I had a question though. This series is now a little less than two decades old. I always wondered if the comic book world was similar to the way it is now. What major changes have you noticed in the comic book industry since you started this series, whether that be as a writer, artist, or consumer?

Thanks for all the thrills!

Sincerely,
Camden Ferrell

Well, Camden, great question. I think the reason comments like what you started your letter with make people like me feel so old is that... the last 20 years don't seem at all like the first 20 years of my life. It all seems like a blur, so really... for the most part, I could say the industry hasn't changed all that much. In other ways, I could say that the industry has changed a great deal... but honestly, in the back of my head I have to acknowledge that my perspective is skewed.

For instance, 20 years ago, I read a lot of Marvel and DC comics. Now I read... next to none. I pretty much only read books by people I know (so don't worry, friend, I'm reading your book!) but I don't follow either universe closely. I follow artists, mostly. I'll buy DC comics drawn by Dan Mora or Jorge Jimenez, or the Marvel comics drawn by Ryan Ottley, Bryan Hitch or Tom Reilly or various other artists I like, but for the most part, in my opinion, both of those companies are adrift and not producing the same level of work they were 20 years ago.

But... I'm an old white guy. They're not supposed to be making comics for me! It's... most likely... a good thing that they're not making comics that appeal to me.

So I guess what I'm saying is, the thing that mostly has changed is the ever present and crushing certainty that my time is over, the world has passed me by, and... the long... quiet... inevitable drift toward irrelevance... has begun?

Good letter, Camden. Feeling great.

Hey TWDD Team!

And Here... We... Go.....

We've reached the 6-issue arc where this book goes completely off the charts intense with our first mega-villain. The physical and psychological pain The Gov inflicts to Rick and Michonne delivers a gut punch of cold apocalypse reality. It got us thinking about the bad guys... a lot. So we've gotta know what was going on in that twisted brain of yours, Kirkman.

1) What was your inspiration for The Governor and his bizarre lifestyle - heads in fish tanks, keeping Penny, and so much more to come in the next arc?

No direct inspiration really, other than wanting to

show how twisted this world is starting to make people. I guess, it all really goes back to Ed Gein in a way, right?

2) How far into The Governor's storyline did you have planned out initially?

Initially? Roughly just to him attacking the prison. But all the details were worked out along the way. Are we spoiling future issues here? Man, this is a minefield to navigate.

3) Of all the supervillains in TWD - Governor, Negan, Alpha - which one is your favorite and why?

I think I've been pretty clear on Negan being my favorite character overall. He's the most interesting and the most fun to write.

4) Did you have any other flushed out villains that you never introduced? Would love to hear what hit the Cutting Room Floor before it even got onto your usual script scribbles.

Sadly, no. There are alternate possibilities to some, like we discussed with the Governor, but no full villains that didn't make it into the book. Unless I'm forgetting something, which is possible. So you'll just have to stay tuned to Cutting Room Floor for the next 162 issues!!!

5) Are there any points where you felt you went too far or not far enough with the villainy? If you could do it again, would you change anything and if so, what?

Easy answers here. No, and I wouldn't change a thing. I think it all worked out just fine and I wouldn't want to muck things up.

We're sort of dreading seeing Issue №33 in color. You know why!

I do, and I promise we'll all get through it together.

Rot on,
Tom McElroy
Brian Lassiter
Austin, TX

Hey, rereading TWD in the deluxe issues, just finished №25.

I came across Mr. Kirkman's work before TWD though, falling in love with the Astounding Wolf-Man.

I remember during my first read through many years ago how cool it would be to have a AWM/TWD crossover, and being disappointed when it never happened.

Any chance you can make it happen this second time around? If not, that's okay, still really enjoying the reliving the series in techni-color,

*Stranger things have happened...*See Becca's letter below.**

Vince Conti
Hamilton, Ontario

No chance of this crossover, sadly. Now I'm worried about this much-hyped Becca letter!

Kirkman,

I've been thoroughly enjoying reading The Walking Dead Deluxe with all its beautiful colors and your fascinating script notes, but there's one thing that's driving me crazy with curiosity. In reading all of the old Letter Hacks I can't help but notice how often you told people there was no way that you'd ever in a million years have The Walking Dead re-released in color. This wasn't something you said once or twice but over and over and over again. So I have to know, what changed? Peer pressure? A giant pile of money? Men with guns? Andrew J. Shaw??

Whatever your reasons, I'm glad you're doing this. The Walking Dead is a true bright spot in my life and I'll always be grateful to you for creating this world.

Becca Broda

Okay... cards on the table. The thing is, people don't seem to love black and white comics. I'd done a lot of black and white comics up to that point, in fact when THE WALKING DEAD started most of the comics I'd done were black and white. And I'd often hear from people, "Let me know when this is in color, then I'll read it!"

I was never opposed to reprinting books in color. I even did that very thing with BATTLE POPE and BRIT a few short years after TWD launched. So the repeated comments from me were not because I was opposed to it, it was because I wanted to make sure people knew the original TWD was the definitive version and they should WAIT for a color version, because there might never be one.

And if people hadn't supported the book and it ended up being a failure... there never would have been this deluxe presentation.

So it was more just posturing to make sure people didn't stop reading. Fun reading those comments now, huh?

Hello Mr. Kirkman and gang!

Since I know we do have some new readers, warning for late series spoilers below...

Really, really enjoying this new Deluxe series. I can't believe how much color can absolutely change so many different scenes! I find it very interesting reading through new Letter Hacks and seeing what all you have to say about The Walking Dead now that it has come to a conclusion. I do have to ask though...and I can speak for many fans here...why did you decide to end the series right after Rick's death? I mean, there could have been a civil war, we could have followed Carl for a long while, maybe we could have even gotten a storyline with the Western Alliance. Come on man! Be honest...did you simply get tired of the series? It was 16 years long after all. Either way, I'm hoping that whenever we get to The Walking Dead Deluxe №193, that a №194 comes out and the series can continue from there...WINK WINK...

Matthew and Elsie Short
Monterey, Tennessee

It could be as simple as that's where the story ended for me. It seemed like the right time to go. You never really know when to get off the ride. Maybe there's more fun to be had, maybe it isn't time to go? Who knows. I think it's better to jump off while there's more gas in the tank, than to keep going until the engine runs dry and you're stranded where you are.

The funny thing is... there are plenty of fans out there who think I did just that! So y'know... to each their own.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I got hooked on comics during the early days of the pandemic and tried to consume as many titles as possible. I read through pretty much everything you've written, plus a bunch of other recent titles and a handful of "the classics". Through it all, my 3 favorites are TWD (duh), Oblivion Song, and Murder Falcon. Two of my most prized issues in my collection are my Lorenzo De Felici variant of MF №5 and my David Finch variant of OS №25. So I really need a Daniel Warren Johnson variant of TWDD to complete that circle.

DWJ and Mike Spicer just did two killer #27 Governor variant covers for Comics Vault Live if you're lucky enough to track one of those down. And for the 15th anniversary back in 2018, he also did a #7 cover featuring Tyreese's first appearance. Happy hunting!

Also, will there be a cover for the first official appearance of AJS (no idea when that actually was)?

Cody Martin
Wichita, KS

Someone needs to track down the first letter printed for Andrew J Shaw! David Harper, I'm looking at you!

Mr. Robert Kirkman Sir, I gotta say I am still loving TWDD in color! My name is George Briggs and I just picked up issue 27 today. Read it once already going to read it one more time and put it up. I enjoyed issue 24 and at the end when Rick gives his speech and says "We are the walking dead!" I love it. I didn't believe a whole year went by already and I have all 27 issues that came out. I can't imagine the wait the people had to endure when the original comics came out when they only had 1 release per month. I do enjoy the double issue release every month. It is still a long process but I'm sure I'll end up with all TWDD 193 Issues when this is finished. Thank you for making such a wonderful, epic adventure and re-releasing it in color!

Only six years to go!

It'll go by in a flash!

Mr. Kirkman,

Hello again! I missed the last letters submission date, but I'm back!

So, I noticed in the first 25 or so issues you've mentioned that you didn't really like variants. However, by No50 there were definitely variants to walking dead. Additionally, we now we have three covers to choose from! When did your opinion on them change?

Well, over time I started to realize there's a huge fanbase that really enjoys collecting variant covers. Who am I to deny them? Also, that collecting fanbase is the one that will make getting to #193 of this reprint series that much easier, so we've decided to embrace them.

Also, you've mentioned printing everything in color. Does that include "The Alien" by Mr. Vaughan? Or is that sacrilege to even mention doing that?

It's possible, but for that one, I'd want to make sure Marcos Martin approves of whatever we do.

Since you're still missing in "Crossover," is there an upcoming guest writer role???

I doubt it. I'm very, very busy these days.

Finally, I got into a new part of this hobby recently, and I'll admit I'm totally going to be circumventing your no collected editions rule by custom binding everything eventually. I might even try to get you to sign one of the volumes...

I wish you all the best!

Very Respectfully,
Matthew Henricks

I love custom binding jobs! I can't wait to see it!

And that's all the new stuff we've got for now. Happy New Year! We'll be back here again answering the latest in issue #37.

BUT, in the meantime, we've still got some classic hacks below!

-Amanda LaFranco

Here's to a 2022 that is finally better than 2020 and 2021, right?! Come on, we need this, world! Get better! See you back here very soon for our next great issue!

-Robert Kirkman

Hey look! Issue 31.

Uh... not a lot of free time these days... just got back from San Diego (it was great meeting you). So... let's answer some MAIL!

Woo hoo!

I received the first collection of comics as a gift last december, and read them a month ago out of boredom, I was very taken with your view of a giant zombie apocolypse, the comic is very fast and very witty, but my favorite part would be the very human characters.

Amazingly, I even tracked down a comic book shop so I could find out what happens, it wasn't quite how I pictured a comic book shop would be like, for one, it was very well lit and the staff was nothing if not helpful, but the rest was exactly how I pictured it, in that a large fraction of the patrons were overweight and kept staring at my chest and mumbling.

I realize you must get a lot of mail, so I doubt this will be read, and I very much doubt I'll ever get a reply, but I thought I would take the time to tell you that you are doing a great job with your

comic book and it is very enjoyable.

Also, I realize the mail account name "burnumall" sounds a bit weird, it's a friend's email account, I'm curious as to exactly what it means but I'm too embarrassed to ask.

-Girl who didn't sign her email

Well, you'll be happy to know I emailed your friend and she told me it has something to do with ancient burial rites and funerary incantations. It all sounded a little fruity to me.

Dear Roberto Kirkenhiem IV,

You're gunna off Glenn aren't ya? It ain't gunna be Rick or Mich, 'cause they're fighters who don't go down like punks. (unless mich sacrifices herself for the good of the others... which I doubt she would do seeing as she's still a relatively new character)

Though if they end up having to fight each other in the arena, I think you need to include with each copy a burnt CD with the Star Trek fight music.

Anyway, on to more pressing matters.

1) I dunno how Rick and the gang are gunna get out of THIS sticky situation (in reference to issue 27 since I know these don't get printed for like 3 issues)

This isn't a question! Grrr.

2) What was the first thing you ever got published, and how did you feel? Your work is so good that it's inspired me to write my own comic books. So far i've got my own zombie series planned, along with a superhero trade and what i'm told is a semi cheesy drama about a guy who has a type writer that can write dreams. Oh, and I almost forgot, but I've got a batman story arch that i'd love to do sometime, but i'd imagine i'd have to be a total success or DC would have to be completely desperate before they let me come within 10 feet of a batman script.

My first published work was the self- published Battle Pope (being reprinted in color by Image right now). It was a great feeling to get that printed comic and hold it in my hands... and I still feel the same way whenever I get a new issue of anything I work on. I truly love this job.

The type writer one is the shortest of the three so i'm going to try and get that published first.

Good luck.

Anyway keep up the good work, lovin' it all, Invincible, marvel zombies, Battle Pope especially.

-Phil

Oh, see—you already knew about Battle Pope.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I am writing this letter to fulfill your female quotient...that's right... I'm a girl. A girl who reads comics...and drools over zombies. But I digress...I read this article in the NY Times a while back, in the fashion section, no less, about the globalization of zombies...I just want to make sure that WD, via the transitive properties, doesn't become lame. Anyway, I really have been enjoying the female characters...Michonne seems interesting...let's see what happens there...Carol seems like she's suffering from PTSD but I hope it's something more devastatingly interesting like bipolar or schizophrenia. I feel like everyone in WD could carry the story on their own...could have their own spin-off...except maybe Dale..... and, I mean, I love what's his face... but Lori is hardcore. She's going to give birth au naturall Boy or Girl? Any names? How about Viscera?

Love,
Leslie

PS, (my gentleman friend will die if you print this)

Consider your gentleman friend DEAD! You don't like Dale? What's wrong with him? Carol probably does have something wrong with her—but y'know... who's there who could diagnose something like that? Thanks for reading.

Just wanted to thank you guys for the awesome story that The Walking Dead is. Your story is the reason I am awake at one in the morning reading with a flashlight and keeping a fire axe at close reach :)

That and the fact that you didn't pay the electric bill, right?

I've not felt this kind of chills since I first read Stephen Kings' The Shining.

Thanks again and keep up the excellent work. I am hungry for more.

Best regards from Iceland
Siggi Ben :)

Thanks, and keep it real! Have fun in Iceland.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Let me start by saying I really love The Walking Dead comics. We used to be on Ebay comic boards and now are on a forum called The Comics Corral and someone pointed out this comic to my husband, who in turn, bought them for me. The series was at issue 19 when he bought the first trade paperback. I fell in love with it. I now not only own all the trade paper backs, but I am getting the ongoing issues, too.

I have no complaints about the story and think it is great. The only suggestion that I have is to make it a TV Show (HBO/Showtime) I don't think they could do justice in a 2-3 hour movie, but an on going series would be great.

TV show, huh? That's a good suggestion. I'll get right on that.

I also am really hoping we can make it to the Comic Con in San Diego so I can meet you. By the way my hubby loves The Walking Dead, too. He mainly collects Superhero Comics. We have thought about checking out Invincible, but we haven't had the chance yet. He does get Ultimate X-Men and Marvel Team-Up. The ONLY complaint is we did order The Walking Dead Hard Cover 1-24 and all we got was the shaft as is sold out. LOL.

Thank you so much for this comic(series).

Thanks,
Kelly Garcia

Wow... is that three out of the first five emails that are girls? Weird. Lotsa ladies in this issue's letters column. Right on.

DUDE!

I hadn't been to my LCS for a while so when I went I had issues 25, 26 & 27 waiting for me so I thought this would be a good opportunity to reread them all from No 1, so I did, and I found some things hopefully you can help me with....

1. In No1 I noticed the escaped jailbird shooting at Rick and Shane looks a lot like a skinny Axel, who just happens to be in jail for armed robbery. Is this a coincidence, or have I ruined where you are going with the Axel plot? Sorry if I have.

Nope, that's just a coincidence... because I'm a hack. He doesn't look THAT much like Axel though.

2. In No15 Thomas says to Patricia he saw her with Otis and asks if it's her boyfriend. A few

pages later when Rick leaves to shoot zombie Shane, Lori wonders if he is going to check on Otis at the farm since they haven't seen him since they left the farm, and he doesn't show up at the jail until Michonne does in No19. So my question is, how did Thomas see Otis? Is this an oversight on your part, 'cause it doesn't add up?

These aren't the droids you're looking for. I think Otis was at the prison briefly dropping off supplies and Lori hadn't seen him. Or something. I'd have to check out the issues... I'm not convinced there is a discrepancy.

3. With all these couples hooking up and having sex, how come no one else is getting pregnant? There's been no talk about birth control or anything, and I thought Hershel would of had a talk to Maggie about it.

I'm sure there's a condom or two lying around the prison somewhere. Little things like this, I feel, are better left assumed and not really dealt with. I mean... where are they getting toothpaste? Is that just in the prison? Did it run out? What about... candles? Or lightbulbs? Did Glenn really steal enough batteries for the flashlights to still be working? It'd be boring if I took the time to explain all that stuff.

4. I know Axel and Tyreese didn't see the helicopter, but how did they not hear it? You can usually hear them way before you can actually see them.

Maybe they we're singing really loud to each other--or were inside the prison, playing basketball--or were yelling at someone. There's any number of excuses... some of them aren't even silly.

5. Since people can turn into a zombie even from deaths non zombie bite related, does that mean the zombie plague/incident started with some kind of chemical warfare or something? Obviously the air/oxygen on earth has been altered. Is this correct? How did you come up with this idea? I've never seen this kind of thing in the Zombie genre where they turn without being bitten.

The origins of the zombie plague are unknown and will probably remain that way... but yeah--it's something even the living are infected with.

I had a few more queries the other day but I can't think of them now....

Sorry about that.

Anyway, keep up the great work. I am loving The Walking Dead. How much you ask? Well, I've been buying every Batman comic for 19 years and they've never taken second place on my pile to be read before, so CONGRATS!!!

Deakin Gilford
Australia

Awesome—thanks for writing.

Letter Hacks,

The reason I am writing is that your fans have written in about some really good zombie stories/movies that I normally wouldn't have known about. Undead, The Zombie Survival Guide, Reign of the Dead, and The Rising/City of the Dead all come to mind. I have no plans to stop buying this comic until the aliens are introduced, but I still seek zombie entertainment between your books. Please encourage your readers to write in about other stories in the genre.

The Walking Dead story is still going strong. I Think you will be able to do a lot with the 2nd group of survivors introduced in 27. Keep up the great work.

Mike Gineman

Thanks!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

You are the man! This is the best Zombie comic ever made! I can't get enough of the great story telling and the art is the best B/W I have seen. I hope this title is leading its way to at least a trilogy of The Walking Dead movies. I have to say that from watching NOLD when I was a kid I grew up with an irrational fear of dead people climbing out of graves and attacking me. Now I am thrilled about all things zombie related and it seems the world is seeing a new age of Zombie interest. Here's to another generation of kids growing up with the fear of the dead. Lastly, is it possible to have readers submit a list of their favorite zombie movies and you could use this info to make a: The Walking Dead Fans Top 25 Zombie Movies Ever list in a future issue? Thanks!

-Some guy who didn't sign his email

That's not a bad idea. Why don't you letter writers start sending in obscure recommendations? I mean... we all know the top TEN zombie movies... or the top ten well known zombie movies... but what about the obscure ones. Snap to it!

Dear Kirkman,
Just thought I would write to give you my props, to ask some questions and voice a complaint.

1. I was getting pretty restless while all of the women in the comic were being pansies, I mean sure, they helped out when they needed to but most of the time they just sat back, worried, complained and had sex with there male counterparts. I was very excited when you brought in Michonne a strong female character. I'm interested in seeing if or how the other female characters react to someone with such a different outlook. Are they going to get up and stop being pansies, or just whine and complain about how much Michonne is not a pansy?

They're probably going to wash clothes and do dishes... and behave. Seriously though (I'm not sexist) the point of the book (or one of them at least) is that the characters grow and change as time goes on. You've got to start somewhere and as time goes on I think you'll see all the characters, female and male, evolve to survive in this zombie-filled world. They won't be frail and helpless much longer (not that they totally were before). Sigh... I should have never killed Donna.

2. In issues 26 and 27 the prospect of feeding the dead to the zombies is brought into the story line... This just doesn't make sense to me. If soon after you die you become a zombie, and zombies don't eat other zombies then could you really shoot someone, chop them up, put them into a sack then feed them to a zombie? I don't think so... Zombies wouldn't be interested in a cold severed arm, it takes the primal hunting instinct out of the picture! I guess it's pointless for me to bring this up now, but eh...

There is a period of time, after a person dies, before the body starts to decompose. As shown in issue 29 with The Governor's daughter, after a while... the meat gets old and isn't good... but before then, it's almost as good as eating live meat.

3. Please don't have a zombie baby... maybe a zombie toddler kind of like in Pet Semetary, but no zombie baby.

No zombie baby? We'll see... if Lori EVER has that kid that is...

Thanks for reading my ranting...

Much love,
Lauren Caitlin Ayrey
Olympia, Wa

Man... a whole lot of ladies wrote in this month. That's totally cool.

That's it for this issue. See you next month!

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hey readers! Amanda here, back for issue #32 – Escape from Woodbury. We're pretty much running from start to finish during this issue and danger seems to be lurking around every corner, so I promise not to keep you all too long. Some big things for the future of our group are slowly getting set up over these next few issues, but I'll say nothing further! You'll just have to stick around. We may be in a new year but are keeping things classic with some old letter hacks from 2006 below. How time flies.

Issue 32 is here, people! The zombie movie that never ends just keeps on not ending and I, for one, couldn't be happier.

Charlie and Cliff have really outdone themselves on this issue. Just when you think these two couldn't do a better job they just come out and blow you away! Nice job, guys.

If you haven't pre-ordered your Walking Dead busts from your local comic shop or from csmoorestudio.com please do so NOW--you will NOT be disappointed. Sculptor-supreme did an AMAZING job on these and you don't want to miss them.

Now let's answer some damn letters!

Dear Bob,

First off I absolutely love this comic, I just started reading them a little less than a month ago and I'm hooked. I find myself yearning for the next one to come out. Now with the questions and comments.

1. I was relieved when Rick had gotten his bad hand chopped off, because other wise he would be kinda useless for a while.

Yeah, and now we don't have to make sure he doesn't USE that hand by accident...

2. In issue №28 when the Govenor was watching the zombies eating the corpses was that a zombie cheerleader at the far right corner of the room.

Could be.

3. If Lori had a miscarriage would the baby become a zombie baby and A) Eat her from the inside out or B) Will she give birth to a zombie baby that would attack Hershel upon delivery.

Possibly BOTH! You never know.

Keep up the good work!!
Matt M.

P.S. Please print my letter!!

Will do!

Mr. Kirkman,

I just finished reading Walking Dead 29. I've previously read the rest of the series, except 28 which I missed. Until now I've enjoyed the series, at least in as much as one can enjoy a series full of heartbreak and misery.

Sadly, I think you've made a huge misstep with this last issue. It isn't gory or sad or heartbreaking. It is vile. It is virtually a celebration of cruelty. It was difficult for me to get through the whole issue.

Before you dismiss this as just another silly moralistic diatribe, let me tell you about myself. I'm your standard thirty-something Canadian atheist at the liberal end of the liberal spectrum. You won't find a more vociferous defender of freedom of expression. I guess what worries me is that if a work doesn't have any meaning or message (which this issue clearly does not), then all that's left is it's value as entertainment. It makes me cringe to think that the material you present in this issue might be anyone's idea of entertainment.

Why am I bothering to write this? I guess I was fairly shocked (I just finished reading it). I made reconsider reading anything you write, although I'll still be picking up Invincible and I'll give Ant-man a shot. Anyway, I know that if I was writing something I'd want to know when I'd made an impact on someone either way, so there you go. For the sake of your remaining readers (you won't count me among them), I hope you can right the ship on future issues.

Sincerely,
Alan Brown

This is a harsh world and harsh things are going to happen to the characters. If you can't handle what happened to Michonne, it's a good thing you're getting off the crazy ride now because I'm sure there are worse things ahead.

Robert,

I was never into comics even as a kid--never followed a monthly book--never really gave a rat's fanny about them until a friend introduced me to Gaiman's Sandman, which got me interested in the art form, but I still never bought a monthly book. Never really cared about zombies, either. They just didn't interest me.

Considering, then, my apathy toward both comics and zombies, the fact that I am now a slaving Walking Dead addict who buys the monthly books speaks volumes for your talents and those of Messrs. Adlard and Rathburn. That really ought to make you proud.

Now on to the questions.

You've mentioned in previous Letter Hacks columns that you have no plans to reveal the origin of the zombie plague, which is, I think, a good move--but as time goes by, are we going to learn more about them? Thus far, we know that the zombies are a) dead; b) ravenous; c) retain no memory of their prior lives, nor any brain functions beyond "eat" and "chase"; d) divided into two categories--roamers and lurkers, and e) die when their brains are bashed in. I could stand to learn more. Seems to me that if Rick & Co. have the chance to learn more information about them, it's another good device to keep people hooked and buying.

We'll certainly learn more about them--but I'd like to point out that we know even LESS than you state here. I mean, just because our characters have started to refer to them as roamers and lurkers that doesn't mean that there actually are two categories or that there are ONLY two categories. The characters don't have all the answers--they could be wrong about a LOT of things.

Bear in mind that I'm not telling you how to do your job, or suggesting improvements. It's pretty obvious the series doesn't need any, or I wouldn't keep buying the books. Basically, this is just me saying, "I'd like to learn more about the zombies."

Tell me more about the zombies, dammit!

Your devoted fan,
Jim Palmer

P.S. Comics aside, you're a pretty fine writer. The aforementioned Gaiman seems to have transitioned from comics to novels (he should go back to comics)--any plans to do any noncomic writing?

If there is ever a Walking Dead spin-off with other characters in another part of the country... I plan for that to be a novel series... but I have to learn how to write novels first. So it will probably never happen.

Letter Hacks,

Your work is top of the game, thank you. I can't wait 'til the governor gets axe to the head or torn up by zombies. Charlie, I just bought some of your art over on splashpageart.com after hearing about that in the lettercols. I definitely read the lettercols! Keep 'em goin' if you can, especially with letters like that AK-47 expert... tell us more dude! So how did Charlie draw such a good AK-47... and does Charlie live in England or something... how do you get your scripts to him?

Carrier pigeon, usually. They've got these kick-ass bank tube things that will get stuff over there--but I can't afford those.

What made you choose Moby Dick as the book that woman was reading? I try and balance my pop reading with classics and just started that one like 2 weeks ago. It's frickin hilarious... well okay it is quite funny if you get past the extremely detailed descriptions... I can see how that sucker would be good for illustration. Any favorite classics of yours, Kirkman? TWD is classic, dude. You've got all these characters to handle and I admire that you take the panels to develop them. You've got the long view in mind and yet each issue and story-arc is great in itself.

What's the next con you'll be at? Do you want to expand your readership? I'm thinking elementary school book fairs. Ok maybe not. I'm certainly doing my best. I can't get my wife to read them but I retell each Walking Dead issue to her and she loves it. So thanks for making me sound like a good storyteller. And Charlie, as soon as I get a coffee table, the big hardback edition is going there so everyone can see your rockin' art. You both have really taken the medium to a higher level, so thanks again for your sweat and tears.

Brian Hans

I hope your wife isn't just humoring you. If she really liked it, the lazy broad would READ the things on her own.

As far as cons go. In light of that last comment, I really don't want to appear in any public places where you could find me. That and the fact that I have a small child at home that I really don't enjoy being away from. I'm trying to sit out 2007 completely. But once the boy is old enough, the wife and I will be wanting to take him all over the place--so I'm sure I'll be back on the convention circuit before too long. That is, If I'm still even remotely possible in a year or so.

Dear Kirk-Man:

Big fan of the book. Normally, I am not a big horror genre guy, but TWD is entertaining and original enough to keep me interested month in and month out. Keep up the good work, and I will keep buying it.

Now that the little bit of ass-kissery is out of the way, the main question I have for you is this: Since Bendis seems to love to throw your name in his books, any temptation to do the same in here? Perhaps have one of the survivors rooting through a medical kit and find a tube of Bendis-Brand Hemmrhoidal Cream? Or maybe they sit back and enjoy a nice 40oz bottle of Brubaker Malt Liquor? Who else would you throw in there?

As much as I love seeing my name plastered all through POWERS it REALLY pulls me out of the story when they need to get over to the corner of "Ellis and Brubaker" street or when they meet up with "Detective Joe Quesada EIC of Marvel Comics." I know most of the guys he does at this point and it's distracting to read such specific names all the time. That said, Axel is named after Marvel Editor Axel Alonso--but you'd never know that if I didn't TELL you. So THEY know but it doesn't pull YOU out of the story.

That's how I prefer to do things. Bendis is a hack.

Anyways, thanks for reading this email. Missed you at Wizard World Chicago, maybe next year?

Peace,
Andy Jonathan.

2008 would be the soonest you'll see me at Chicago again.

Dear Robert,

I'm still fairly new to the book, and there are a lot of characters to keep track of: you mind killing some of them off? Rick, I got. And Michonne...Carol is blonde, right? I think I wrote a mail recently asking you some questions, but it might not have gone through. One question was basically: What does God think about the whole alien/ zombie take-over of Earth? I mean he kind of let it happen, right?

God is make believe in the world of The Walking Dead.

How come none of the characters at the prison ever pray?

I'm sure Hershel does... maybe more. I just haven't shown that yet... or, actually... I seem to recall showing Hershel pray at LEAST once.

Another question: How much does it take to kill one of the zombies? Or are they even killable? They're kind of dead already too, right? And with so many dead zombies around how come there's no smell?

There's a smell, but I imagine you'd get used to it after a while. Kill the brain and you kill the zombie.

3) Why are you wrapping up Marvel Team-up? Hopefully to go on to do bigger and better (Captain America) things (again), right?

I'm wrapping up Marvel Team-Up because it's a hard (but fun) book to write and I'd like to move on to other things. It was going to continue, they were actually talking to a big name creator about coming on with 25 at one point--which would have been cool, but sales were so low they decided to end it.

Your mailing address says Lexington, Kentucky? You don't really live there, do you?

I live CLOSE to Lexington. I need to change that P.O. Box...

How come there are no flashbacks in TWD? To b4 the plague--is it considered a plague?--I mean. I think it would be fun.

This isn't LOST--and there's not anything important I've had to show. Issue 7 started with a flashback. Haven't NEEDED to do it since then.

And, finally, I think any good writer or editor would tell you ya got way too many heroes in the book, especially for it being

black and white! They mentioned watching a movie in №30; what kinda movies we talkin' about? Recent? How long ago Was the plague anyway?? Maybe Rick and company oughtta just find a tank and go looking for people, huh? Who was the black guy who came back to the prison at the end of №30? I didn't recognize him!! I thought only Rick, Michonne and the meak looking guy went after the helicopter! Nobody called him by name, either: THAT was a BIG help!

It was Tyreese--did I really not say his name? Crud. I do that way too often. Sorry it's hard to follow all the characters. I'll see what I can do about killing some of them off.

I am liking me some Walking Dead though; but I still say Invincible will probably outlast this series in the long run, although both will have pretty healthy runs. How about "Dead End" for a new letters column title, just off the top of my head? How about a riot at the prison? Why am I asking so many questions? What IS Funk-O-Tron, anyway??....

Sincerely
Andrew J. Shaw

Thanks for writing!

Mr. Kirkman,

First, I would like to say that I am a fan of your work (Invincible is the best superhero comic in the universe). However, issue №29 of The Walking Dead is making my fandom a bit shaky.

As a man of African descent, I was quite disturbed and appalled by the image of a strong, powerful black woman stripped of her power and humanity by being raped and brutally beaten by a white man not once, but twice in the same issue.

I must say that I am way past tired of this sick, pathological white man's portrayal of black women as some kind of chocolate rape fantasy in film (Pam Grier and Halle Berry anyone?) and specifically in comics. I've already had enough of this shit with Storm. Courtesy of Chris Claremont, she left Africa at the behest of a white man, never looked back and has since been a stripped-down, scantily-clad, placed-in-bondage sex toy for the Hellfire Club and Loki. She's also been stroke-off fodder for horny white male readers who dared cry foul when some spear chucker in Wakanda married her and thus stole their ebony S&M fantasy away from them.

I can't be held responsible for how black women have been treated in comics in general. This is a harsh world and harsh things happen to ALL the people in this book. I'm sorry it was the black woman who got raped but I'm ONLY interested in "could or would that happen in such a situation" and if the answer is yes, I don't feel like I did anything wrong.

But I digress. The matter at hand here is The Walking Dead №29.

I understand the idea of dramatic effect in storytelling, but goddamn it, did Michonne have to be tied up spread eagle, raped and tortured? Did a strong black woman have to be broken down to the lowest of the low? Is it a case of art imitating life in the sense that if black people are too strong they not only have to be stopped but destroyed? Would you have put any of the white female characters in the book through the same ordeal? I don't think you would have. You never see strong white female characters in comics being dehumanized like that. I guarantee that Michonne's fate will not be shared by Supergirl, Power Girl and certainly not Wonder Woman.

I assure you this was not an effort to "destroy" a strong black female.

I know that the comic book industry is an ivory tower that is and always has been ruled by white men of varying ages, sensibilities and prejudices. And those prejudices have often shown themselves in the stereotypical and racist depictions of people of color, specifically African people, and, case in point, African women. I'm not letting Chris Claremont off the hook for writing storm as some exotic sex slave. I'm not letting racist-ass Robert Crumb off the hook for Angelfood McSpade. And, I'm not letting you off the hook for your need to portray yet another black woman rape fantasy in The Walking Dead. Whether you did this unconsciously, subconsciously or very consciously I don't know, but you did it and my conscience won't allow me to sit still and not address this. Some people don't know how to call shit when shit needs to be called, but I'm calling you on this, Mr. Kirkman.

You're more than entitled to be pissed off and to tell me your pissed off. But when a white male is raped, I hope you're just as upset. And when a white woman has something bad happen to her... and when anything generally rotten happens to any character in this book... I expect an email.

I'll spare you a lengthy diatribe about how the rape of African women by white men was part of the dehumanization process during slavery,

but I will say that I know several African American readers of The Walking Dead and they too have expressed their disgust at the portrayal of a black woman getting raped by a white man. Some have told me that they're not going to read the book anymore. The black female readers that I know have especially expressed their disgust. Even though we all know that Michonne is going to get some medieval-on-your-ass payback on that no-good, Dick Dastardly-looking cracker, it won't begin to make up for her humanity being robbed like that. The image of Michonne's bloody, swollen face is still difficult for me to look at. And I don't want to hear any of that "but the rape was off panel" shit either.

It was SUPPOSED to be difficult for you to look at. It was supposed to make you upset. You're supposed to care about these characters enough to be pissed off when bad things happen to them.

But listen, if I was portraying The Governor as anything but an evil psychotic freak--if he had even the smallest hint of "this is an okay guy" that would be completely racist of me... and I would expect to be "called out." But I had a horrible character do a horrible thing to show how horrible he was.

And it was Michonne because she's a character readers wouldn't expect to die--the danger is more real for her. Rick has survived enough that readers think he might be safe. Also, in the scene that led to her rape--Rick's hand was cut off, Michonne attacked Governor, causing him to retaliate.

I couldn't cut Michonne's hand off--and have Rick attack Gov, and then get raped, simply because a side character getting a hand cut off ISN'T a big deal. It had to be RICK. So then the options for a character attacking are Michonne and Glenn--it seemed more in-character to me for Michonne to attack instead of Glenn. I wanted to kind of have Glenn freaking out--this is the first time he's really been around some shit like this. Sure, he crept around zombies to gather supplies but he'd never seen someone whack off someone else's hand--that would STILL be traumatic.

I'm just saying, there's a logical reason for everything... and it's NOT racial in motivation.

Mr. Kirkman, I met you and took a photo with you at the 2006 San Diego Comic Con and you seem like a really cool guy. I don't want to believe that you're a racist, but I really don't think that you understand the gravity of the images you have portrayed, especially to your African American fans, particularly your female ones. You're one of my favorite writers in the business. I love Invincible and it

was that love that made me want to read The Walking Dead in the first place, but I don't know if I can read it anymore after this. It's a damn shame because like I said, I am a fan. At least I think I still am.

Militantly yours,
Sundjata Abubakari

What would you prefer? Do you REALLY want every African-American character to be SAFE because I don't want to look like a racist? Do you want to read a book like that? A book where characters you relate to have no danger--no suspense because you know I can't hurt them for fear of a backlash?

That's not the kind of book I want to write.

NOBODY is safe in this book. NOBODY. If I kill a Jewish person am I going to hear from Jewish people? Martinez is the first Hispanic character in the book. Does he have to be safe so that race remains represented? I can't think like that, or the stories will suffer.

Please cut me some slack here.

Hi Robert,

I have a few thoughts about WD.

In WD №29, why haven't the zombie heads in the box chewed up Rick's hand, which was in there with them?

Maybe they were--we didn't show inside the box. Or maybe they were stacked with their mouths AWAY from the head.

A nasty thought: if Lori's baby died in utero, would it turn zombie and chew her up?

It's possible.

What is the status of wildlife and animals in general? Are they all being chewed up like the deer we saw early on, or are some of them managing to coexist, or even *benefit* from the presence of zombies in their ecosystems (ie: ravens, rats)?

I'm sure it's a little bit of everything. I don't assume much of the wildlife is affected now that there are essentially REALLY SLOW humans without guns running around out there. I would think most wildlife would be better off in this situation.

I really hope the narrative trajectory might turn to the comparison of good and bad

leadership (ala "WaterShip Down" and "Platoon") as I do think Rick has the potential to be a truly great, really heroic and visionary leader, and this travails could well make him an even better one! The loss of this right hand **is** seriously disabling (I had a busted hand a few years ago and that made life difficult enough), but maybe it will help him to use his heart and his intellect to make consistently better decisions.

Keep it coming!

Best wishes,
Ian C. Thomas

Yeah, Rick is definitely going to have some hard times ahead of him.

Ya Know..

10 years ago, when I was 16 I stopped buying comics. Completely Cold Turkey. Before that I was spending \$150-200 a month on comics. So I quit. Moved on to other things and whatnot.

Worst mistake of your life... probably.

Then one day I see The Walking Dead. I Love Zombies. Always Have. My favorite movie ever is the original Night of the Living Dead. I used to love comics. So I took a chance and bought it.

No. You gave me back the art of READING a comic. Enjoying it from beginning to end and waiting so patiently yet eagerly for the next issue regardless of when it gets released.

Each time I see a new issue I tense up. I Gasp! I'm excited and can't wait to get home and read it. Even if it only lasts me 15 minutes, the wait is worth it.

Yes, your team is THAT good.

I just wanted to tell you that.

I only need to say thank you once. Thank You!

-Derek Burns

You know--if you want it to last LONGER than 15 minutes... you could read the letters columns. But you'll probably never read THIS... so there's really nothing I can do for you.

Mr. Kirkman,
Good evening. So, I see a lot of letters from

"Zombie fans" who love your book, which is the obvious result of reading a story on a topic you like, but not many from people like me who really never got into the whole "Zombie" thing. Don't get me wrong, it's not the "idea" I don't like but I think more the comedy that's usually associated. I was relieved to read that you will be keeping this title "dead serious."

I've gotten plenty of letters that start with "I don't like zombies--but I read this book" SO THERE!

Ya so, I never was into the Zombie thing really, and when the owner of my comic shop of choice (Mike from Main Street Comics in Jersey) told me I had to read it I was sure it was going to be something I read and then passed on. Wow, was I wrong. This is now at the top of my read list and I have Mike and you to thank for it! Well more you, but Mike played a role at least. :) What has worked for me is that this book has stayed away from the "hilarity" of the zombie animals and the aptly dressed cheerleader and athlete zombies. Not that I don't find them funny, but I am much more likely to be in for the long haul on a book that makes me think and analyze rather than giggle and move on. So thank you much for such a great book and for allowing me to finally appreciate a good "zombie tale."

I prefer serious zombie stories myself.

Also, because you print the majority of letters that contain criticism, a new reader might get the idea that this book isn't living up to its hype. With rave reviews, shout-outs on G4's Attack of the Show, and a generally positive word of mouth, one might think you've slipped. In my opinion, that couldn't be further from the truth. The book is AWESOME! Not just a good read, but one of the best I have read in my 15 years of comic book reading. The story has moved along just perfect so please ignore the "not enough zombie" stuff. A good story is one that not only entertains but captivates.

Yeah, I've had people ask if the book is still doing well because I print all the negative mail. I mean, for every negative letter I print there's like five that just say "hey--love the book." I can't print THOSE in a letters column. How do I respond to the same thing 20 times? The negative mail is much more fun to respond to and it's more fun to read.

I love the cliffhanger endings and detailed story lines. This book, like very few others, (Girls by the Luna Brothers, Y the Last Man by BKV are good examples) tells a story

that we become captivated with the more we learn about it. This genre has been done time and time again and yet we are still surprised when you reveal your latest plot twist, zombie related or not. That's hard to do with today's "over saturation of information," so kudos are due indeed.

And what's a letter without numbered questions I ask?

1. Why is it that the interior art is black and white? Its great and all, just curious. Is the cost to color that much of a factor?

Actually, I think because of the cover stock we use and paper quality it costs MORE per issue to print than Invincible. I could make this book color and change the paper quality and SAVE money.

2. When do we get to find out how the whole Zombie thing started? (Not rushing you just needed a number 2)

Your loyal reader,
-Dan Murray

NEVER. Sorry.

Dear Mr.Kirkman

I'd like to start by saying you and the whole team (Adlard, Rathburn and Wooton) are doing an AWESOME job! And the suspense in Issue 30, first making us wonder if the figure we saw running to the prison was actually Glenn was bad enough but saving the governor's response to Rick in the end of issue 29 till the last page, pure evil! And now for some questions!

1) Why hasn't natural Decomposition of the zombies set in? There is a Beautiful back cover on issue 28 wher a zombie girl appears to have maggots on one of her shoulders (My favorite back cover so far actually) and it got me thinking, why haven't we seen hordes of carrion feeders preying on the undead? Vultures, Maggots, Rats, and Ants, those kind of things?

We've seen a little of that. They're there.

2) Since finding the prison it doesn't seem like the main characters have had much of an interest in finding other people, which I thought would be one of their top priorities. Doesn't it make sense that by now they would have at least tried to secure a CB radio?

They've been busy.

3) When can we expect the return of Rick's zombie hand? Im hoping that by issue 50 it makes its comeback leading a horde of severed limbs.

NO.

Well I think that's enough questions for one letter. And thanks again for an awesome read every month!

Sincerely,
Jeff Wiebe

Thanks--we'll keep trying to not suck.

Mr. Kirkman,

(insert first time writing to a letters page remark)

The Walking Dead is probably the best comic book in the universe and I would just like to say thanks alot for all your hard work. A few questions...

1-With all that has taken place in the world of TWD why hasn't there been any talk of God? I understand that that's not what the book is about but still if I were Rick I couldn't help but wonder. Yet, in all fairness I guess they are to busy trying to survive to worry about the afterlife.

I'll try to mention it a few more times as the book goes on. It's been mentioned before--just not very much.

2-I don't mean this in a racist sort of way, but do you think it's possible that zombies prefer certain ethnicities or races because they taste better? I mean I'm not a cannibal or anything (although when I was younger I did go through a phase in which I ate my scabs)...

GOOD LORD. WHAT?

I think I've gone too far so I'll end things here by saying, keep up the good work.

(insert please print my letter remark)
Vin Gilante

You're a nut, Vin.

That's it for this issue. See you next month!

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome back, folks! Amanda here, finally letting out a breath I'd been holding since Rick and company arrived in Woodbury. They're finally free of that hell-town and yet, I'm still very on edge. It could be the zombies no doubt lurking between the group and the prison, or it could be the still very open-ended fate of The Governor. Who can say? What I can say, is that we've got a sampling of classic letters here which have me much less anxious. Let's dive in!

Well, this issue was a bit intense, right? Sorry if you weren't expecting that. To be honest, I really wasn't expecting it either. It all seemed right to me as far as how the story was going. I mean, let's be honest--the Governor deserved it right?

Sure.

Let's answer a bit of mail, shall we?

Kirkman,
Just an idea. So many fans have asked how much time passes in between plot threads. And the baby is a great mechanism to show that. How about an issue with a ticking clock to show exactly how slow time passes?

Well, the thing about keeping it vague is that I don't have to be completely precise when it comes to the passage of time. It's just not in my best interest to lay it all out so readers can catch me make a mistake. I know roughly how much time is passing, and when, but making that public would just lead to confusion.

Walking Dead is by far the best character driven comic out there. Please follow up on the idea of how society would develop when it is isolated. Bigomy. Entertainment. Government. Religion hasn't been brought up much though. Thanx.

Todd C. Herbst

You'll see plenty about religion before long. I've got to get through my gratuitous violence stage first.

Hello Mr. Kirkman--

We in Canada love the Walking Dead and we especially love arena death matches. Issue thirty-one was sweet. \$@*% another cliff hanger? Cripes it makes me feel like a junkie as soon as I finish reading an issue I'm already jonesn' for another fix.

That's the idea!

I tried Day of the dead, Omega man, 28 Days later, nothing fills/stops the cravings. The recolored Battle Pope helps, though.

That makes next to no sense... but if it gets you reading, all the better!

I work at a comic store and the trades are great to get the kids hooked they read one then come back for 2-4 the next like clock work then the weak willed ones usually succumb to the issues. Thanks for the awesome book!

From the frozen north
Riley Rossmo

Thanks for reading--and writing!

Robert,

Just wanted to check in and let you know how good the current WD arc is. Can't wait to see where we're going on this ride. On a different note, I really enjoy the letter column, and I think its pretty cool that you print so many of them. I like hearing readers ideas, questions and suggestions as well as your responses. This is my second time writing to you (1st one was published, thank you very much) and I'm not sure if you have ever covered this or not. Have you considered another ongoing title set in the Walking Dead universe? I mean whole different set of people in another city altogether. I know you did that small follow up in the Image Christmas 05 special, I just thought that there might be some room in the backdrop you created for additional groups of people dealing with Zombies in other locations.

Just a thought. Talk you soon. Keep up the

good work. Tell Charlie to keep it up too.

Clyde in NJ

A second series with new characters isn't the worst idea in the world. There was a time early on where I had actually considered the idea. In the end I decided against it because I think expanding the book into a line of books would eventually weaken the popularity of this series and hurt sales and possibly sabotage this book. I want to write this book for a good long time. I'm not after the quick cash, I just want to tell my stories.

So yeah, only one book for the time being.

It appears the stars have aligned and I must write, for in the last issue you asked for favourite obscure zombie movies and boy have I got an obscure one for ya! Plus you seemed to dig the chick letters so here's another for you. First the gratuitous "OMG I love you man". I do. You are a sick and deviant mind and your work, and the work of the rest of the Walking Dead team of course, is incredible. The black and white style is amazing and the perfect choice for such a graphic story. Letting the imagination fill in the colour delivers far more gore than you would ever really put to paper (or may be that's just me...). I love the fact that the storyline is really exploring how the most dangerous thing we can possibly face in any time of crisis is each other.

Guess I'll throw a Zombie question out there before I wrap this up (everybody's doin' it). I'll skip the "give me upcoming plot details" part of the question. I hope that's OK, but I kinda thought I'd let you tell the story. Here goes; Most plagues have symptoms other than your main one and also a certain percentage of people who seem to be immune. Why do you think we don't tend to see this in zombie plague stories?

Bad writing? On my part at least.

Here comes the obscurity, are you ready for it? My favourite obscure zombie flick is INTERCESSOR: ANOTHER ROCK AND ROLL NIGHTMARE. Why you might ask (and believe me if you had seen it you would ask)? Because I'm in it. I'm the Cop Zombie! I got to eat latex intestines and even had a couple of lines. It was a lot of fun to be part of something so very "B" and to be a creature that I love so much.

That's all she wrote,
Lisa Hudson

Man, I had to read this whole damn letter so you

could promote some movie you're in. Jerk. Oh, well, any letter from a female reader is always worth printing.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Doing a fantastic job as always on the book. As far as other zombie movies go, here goes...

1-THE DEAD NEXT DOOR-Pretty ambitious for being shot on super 8.

2-ZOMBIE HOLOCAUST-How can you go wrong with Zombies AND Cannibals. Some of the lamest dialogue ever but gory.

3-NIGHTMARE CITY-Unintelligent zombies who can use automatic weapons, fun!

4-BLIND DEAD films-Great stuff. Zombie knights templar.

5-EROTIC NIGHTS OF THE LIVING DEAD-Don't even ask...D'Amato trying to merge horror with hardcore pornography

6-DELLAMORTE DELLAMORE-Fantastic! Soavi does a great job here of adapting the Dylan Dog italian comic book.

7-BURIAL GROUND-Horrible, but gory.

Plus where else will you see an actor playing a mother's kid son older than the actress playing the mother!

8-HELL OF THE LIVING DEAD-A bad rip off of Dawn, right down to the music.

9-All the Fulci Zombie movies, GATES OF HELL, THE BEYOND, HOUSE BY THE CEMETARY, ZOMBIE, and ZOMBIE 3.

I'm sure there are others, but that's all I can think of right now...

Jeff Baughman

Thanks for the list, Jeff!

Hey Robert,

Just dropping another line, letting you know how much I'm digging the new direction the story's going in. It's a nice departure from the Romeroesque prison scene. Not that the prison's a bad setting (far from it), but the fortress mentality of these characters, while not unrealistic, reminds me too much of the sub-plots for a half dozen other zombie stories out there. To tell you the truth, it's the little touches in this town that I'm really enjoying. The scene with the screaming mother was particularly telling: bitch and scream all you want, but the men with the guns are the ones in control. Depending on your political bent, you could draw all kinds of metaphors from that page alone.

I'm sure I'll get angry letters from people doing just that.

Anyway, enough film school bull. A few comments, a few questions.

An issue or two back, one of your readers seemed to have a thunderous hard-on for the AK-47. This, of course, brings all kinds of uncomfortable images to mind (I wonder- does Charlton Heston have a pin-up calendar?) Regardless, the AK is a terrible weapon. Sure, you could beat a herd of cows to death with the thing, throw it in the mud, drop it in saltwater, and set it on fire and it'll keep firing...but does it fire accurately? Far from it. Unlike the M-16, the AK is a crudely machined bit of equipment, and when it fires the recoil causes the entire assembly to clatter like a loose set of keys, throwing your accuracy way off after the first shot. The rifle can also be fired on full auto, leading too many users to give in to temptation and uselessly "rock and roll." I'm not at all into guns, but I've had the chance to fire an AK, and I know enough about the weapons' history to know that the rifle would be a poor choice for the zombie survivalist. Martinez has the right idea, when he tells Rick he's helping him escape. A single shot, scoped rifle would be the most logical choice.

I'm totally canceling that AK-47 I've had on layaway. Thanks for the advice.

I don't know if you've addressed this before, but when exactly does this story take place? The only reason I ask is that if the plague began after the invasion of Iraq, it'd go a long way to explaining why you don't see more military hardware or zombies in uniform.

I imagine issue 1 took place around October of 2003 and we're roughly 7 or 8 months after that by now, creeping into summer of 2004.

When you get the chance, you should check out "Word War Z." Great book, kind of a "Longest Day" version of a zombie plague.

It's on my to-read list.

Sorry 'bout the last letter, didn't think you'd throw up. But you know, zombie feces and all.... it kind of makes sense.

Oh, one last thing. Rick needs a hook. A big, shiny, fuck off chrome job that'd make Peter Pan soil himself. And an eye patch. I guess a parrot might be too much to hope for.

Looking forward to more carnage,
C.S.

P.S. Tell Charlie, Cliff and Rus they're doing fine work.

Charlie, Cliff and Rus--I just wanted to say, you're doing fine work!

Dear Robert Kirkman,
I'm writing this mail in order to want you to know that you have lots of fans in Turkey :)

That's cool to know. I'm a HUGE fan of turkey (note lack of capitalization).

In Turkey we do not have local comic book shops everywhere like you guys have so it's really difficult to track down the new comics. That's why I happened to know your awesome masterpiece late enough to miss few first issues (to be honest, I missed nearly 20 issues). But in Turkey we have proverbs saying that It's never too late to mend and A fault confessed is half redressed. So I began to track the Walking Dead from 19th issue. From there on I add a copy of "Walking Dead" to my shopping cart every month. At this point I must thank the DCP team for helping me to cover the missed issues.

Wow--I'm sorry it's such a chore to get books over there. Don't sweat coming onto the book late. What matters most is that you're here now.

From my childhood to my adulthood I have a keen interest in walking dead stuff. I have watched the Romero's quadrilogy more than a couple of times (do not know the number exactly). Like Master Romero, in the Walking Dead you have created the atmosphere so good that when reading there were sometimes that I have totally collapsed. More over the "human psychology in the shitty conditions" that you reflect make me to think once more about the survival ethics. What I am trying to say in short is you are genius :) Thank you so much! Not only you but all the team!

That's all from Turkey now.

Lot's of respects,
Can Kartoglu

P.S: I have enjoyed reading "Marvel Zombies", that was F-U-N!

Glad you liked it.

Dear Kirk-THE-Man,

I just read your interview with CBR News where you mention zombie stories are meant to show the changes that would happen to society over time. I couldn't agree more, and I love

that you realize the story potential that you are doing with TWD.

With the unnecessary praise done, let's get down to business. In TWD №29, the Governor gives his daughter a hand to eat, presumably Rick's. In the first panel it's clearly a left hand, but it was Rick's right hand that was cut off. In the next panel, it magically becomes a right hand. Even though it's implied that the hand is Rick's, I suppose you could say the first hand was from a person in the helicopter crash, given to the daughter first off panel, and the second hand shown is Rick's. I doubt I'm the first to notice this, but what do you say, do I get a no-prize? Or how about a decayed-prize, expired-prize, etc.

Until I see a Battle Pope, Capes, Invincible, Science Dog, TWD crossover (actually I'd love to see that),
-efcufochr

Your no prize is in the mail.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I always figured US creators and other related lifeforms would be glad and surprised to hear their work is read and appreciated so far away from home... and I all I ever get from you is a "so you're European, big deal". Bendis actually corrected my list of his Spanish-published work once, when I wrote to congratulate him about it. He CORRECTED it.

Can a bald American be any more arrogant than that? I guess he doesn't realize I could kill him and still get a year of pre-scripted Bendis books, which means he's not completely safe from my wrath.

So no list for you, Mr. Kirkman.

So you're European? Big deal!

I will, however, tell you a little story about my friends and co-workers. I've been following your work on its original American format since TWD's first issue. When it started getting published in Spain (5 issues at a time, almost one book every six months -- can't you fix that somehow?) and I saw the first issue while hanging out in a local comic store with other people I suffered something that vaguely resembled an asthma attack, which surprisingly got several of my friends to buy the book. Well, that and the gorgeous black and white art.

Flash forward a year or two (your book really comes out too slowly here, Mr. Kirkman), when a friend of mine went to London with his

girlfriend. There, he saw an unpublished book of TWD and carelessly took a peek inside. This had two effects:

1) My friend saw Rick with his hand cut off. A sizable force of security guards and worried girlfriends had to prevent him from gouging his eyeballs out with a Wolverine action figure.

It's easier with a Spider-Man figure.

2) I finally had somebody to talk to about the last story arc of the book. I was dying here. I knew all these important things about rape and mutilation while everybody else was still talking about how cool Rick's speech at the end of the last book was. I feel much better now, thanks.

So there you go. Greetings from Spain. By the way, this eyeless friend of mine also loved Marvel Zombies. I didn't read it when he did. Now that I've had to survive months of him randomly bringing it up in the middle of unrelated conversations I think I never will. Nothing personal, of course.

Keep it up. Faster.
Néstor Forján

We're trying to do the books faster here in the states. As far as foreign reprints go, I don't have much control over that stuff. It's pretty much up to the foreign publishers when the books ship.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Awesome job. You are an inspiration. I'm a writer myself but not for comics. Anyways, one thing that really bugs me is, are you planning on including Morgan and Duane Jones in any future issues? Like I always imagined Rick and his group meeting up with the Jones' and them having their own group. Maybe for a battle against a huge zombie army? I don't know, I'm just talking out of my ass. But seriously, I would love to see the Jones' come back and I'm sure I'm not alone in this.

Awesomely sincere,
Will C.

I want them back in the book more than anyone, trust me. I always intended to bring them back. It's just taking me a while to figure out a believable way to get them back into the book. It'll happen, though.

Damn you, Kirkman.

I've been an avid comic book fan my entire life. Most of my childhood was spent with my nose in an Avengers book, or something involving the X-Men. As I grew into my teens and beyond, I kept up with my favorite mags. Eventually it got to the point where I just waited for the trade paperbacks to come out, so I could get great lumps of the story all at once.

That's how it's been for me- wait till the trade comes out. I remember my brother exclaiming how somebody named Onslaught was going to kill everyone but the X-Men. I was tempted to pick up individual issues, but I held off. When Grant Morrison came to write the X-Men I was excited, but did I pick up individual issues? Nope. I waited, and lo and behold, the trades came out on a regular basis and I kept up with the story. When Infinite Crisis, and Identity Crisis before it, blasted onto the shelves I remained in control and isolated myself from my favorite websites, lest I discover something that would ruin the story when I read it in its entirety. Currently, even as intrigued as I am about Marvel's current Civil War storyline, I'm waiting. I'd rather read it in a collected volume.

So I say again, damn you, Kirkman.

My brother let me know about The Walking Dead a couple of years back. He recommended it highly. As he's as much a connoisseur of zombie fiction as I am (my brother and I were both traumatized by a young viewing of "Dawn of the Dead", and to this day do not go into malls without scoping out defensive positions first), I knew I had to check this book out. Luckily the first trade had already been published, so I picked it up-and was absolutely enthralled. Clearly this was a book written for zombie fans by a zombie fan. It had everything I wanted- gruesome hordes of the undead, great artwork and characters that were so well-written I caught myself actually feeling wretched when one or the other got bitten. I still mist up when I re-read the first trade and see Jim's long, slow decline into zombiehood. That's good stuff, man.

And yet I still held out, stubborn cuss that I am, from buying the individual issues. I eagerly snatched up the trades when they came out, and at least the first three ended story arcs so I didn't have to wait to see how a cliffhanger resolved itself.

Everything was going so well until you threw that damned helicopter into the mix. My brother bought me the latest trade for my birthday, and I immediately excluded myself from the rest of my family to tear through it. A helicopter? Cool. It stands to reason that others are out there with aircraft. Rick's group

couldn't be the only ones left. Going out to check the crash with riot gear? Makes perfect sense- I've been reading about the group's adventures in the prison for a year now, so why didn't it ever occur to me that they should have riot gear laying around someplace?

Then they got to Woodbury. And they met the Governor. And Rick's hand was chopped off, and Michonne was raped and brutalized. And I realized the bloody trade paperback had less than 20 pages left. And then I realized something else: there was no way I would be able to leave these characters in limbo until the next trade came out.

So I say one last time: damn you, Kirkman.

I just bought issue №31, and half-read the thing in the car on the way home while I was driving because I couldn't wait to see what happens next. Marvel was unable to suck me back in to buying issues month by month. DC couldn't do it either. But your story about Rick and his people trying to survive a zombie apocalypse did it. Now I'm going to be one of those people awaiting your book each and every month, gathering in front of the local comic book shop the day it's realized, ready to devour your story as soon as I can sink my teeth into it... hey, that sounds kind of familiar, huh?

You write one mean story, Mr. Kirkman, and you've hooked me. I can't wait to see what happens next.

Thanks for that.
Rob Casaletta

Cool. The more people I can pull from the TPBs to get on the singles the better. You don't want to miss out on these wildly entertaining letters columns, right?

The Walking Dead changed my life!

Okay, maybe that was a little dramatic but I can say that I have no idea how I didn't read this book before now. I loved Marvel Zombies and I am really digging your work on Ultimate X-Men (the Shi'ar as a Scientology-like religion is brilliant) but until last week I had never picked up a copy of Walking Dead or Invincible. A friend of mine had been telling me that I really should be reading your other books. So I got my hands on collections of Walking Dead and Invincible and I am loving them so freaking much. I read through Walking Dead in a few days - I just could not put it down - and now I am on the second trade of Invincible and I think I have a new favorite super-hero book.

Thanks for coming around--but you only read my Marvel stuff for a while? FOR SHAME!

But back to my homeboy Rick and the rest of the walking dead - I am so in love with this book and these characters (even though you keep killing them). This has to be the most ingenious use of zombies in recent memory (Shaun of the Dead coming in second). Your focus on the emotional impact on the survivors gives the book such depth and soul. I can't say enough about it. And so far Invincible is the best super-hero book I have read in a long time. Your writing has really inspired me to get off my butt and pick up a pen. A friend of mine and I have an idea for a story for some time and reading your work has really inspired me to move forward with this.

I guess my only questions for now are:

1. Do you have a planned ending for Walking Dead? How long to you plan the series to run?

I would like the series to go on as long as humanly possible. I'd be happy to do 300 issues. No planned ending in mind. I'll wrap it up when it's time... until then, I'll play it by ear.

2. Any chance Rick is going to pull an Ash and fix a chainsaw to his newly made stub? Perhaps a boomstick?

No chance.

3. Would you suggest self-publishing or trying to get published as a new writer?

— Chris Gray

Yes, but it's very difficult. You need to be sure that it's something you want to do.

My greatest praises to you, Lord Kirkman,

TWD is by far the greatest comic book i have ever read. Infact, it was the first one i started reading religiously, and now is the only one i can afford on my meager paycheck. I got a girlfriend, so now I have to cut back on my comic book budget, but TWD will always be bought, every month. I've been pimping TWD to all my freinds. Enough praises for you. Now for Questions.

1) What about those two dudes back in Rick's Home town, are they alive, will we even know? Will they show back up!

See previous letter.

2) Tyreese said he wouldn't give up looking for

Rick till he "See his body," too bad that dead body would try to eat him... Just thought that was funny.

Good point.

3) What's up with the Governors family! Why are they Zombies!? The doctor said something about it, but it just raised more questions than it answered!

All will be revealed in time.

4) Rick only has one hand, any chance he'll pull an Ash Williams and replace it with a chainsaw? I know your all thinking this, just no one had the balls to ask.

No chance.

5) Still about Rick's hand, the hand that was severed, that was the hand he broke to hell on the guys face, right? That means he still has one good hand... right?! I looked though the whole book, making sure, over and over, but i'm still not content.

Yes, his bad hand was the one that was severed.

6) How old is Carl now? He's acting more older than i thought he was, taking care of his mom and all... Is it just forced maturity, in an apocalyptic world, or is he like 13 now?

Only 7 months or so have passed since the first issue. Carl is just growing up due to the situation he's in.

Well, that's all i have time for. Goodbye Kirkman, and Kudos to Marvel Zombies.

-TheWordSayer

Thanks!

Mr. Kirkman:

I'm a very big fan of the Walking Dead series. I really do enjoy what you are doing with it. I read the first three trades & then I decided to go monthly. I simply did that because I just couldn't wait for the next trade six months down the line. But, I'm afraid to say that Walking Dead №31 will be my last monthly issue. It's not that I don't like the series. I really do. But, the duration of the delays between the monthly issues is getting out of hand. I find it hard to sit down and enjoy the story. Getting 22 pages once every 6 to sometimes 8 weeks just kills the enjoyment of the story. I will though continue to purchase the trades. It was the trades that made me a fan. It was the monthly

issues that cooled my interest. I will miss those great letter pages. But, what can I do?

Please do keep up the great work. After all, I will be following the trade paperback editions.

AA

The delays have not been the most ideal of situations, true, but hopefully in the coming months that will really, and truly be behind us. I got hit with a number of things this year that slowed me down, one of which was the birth of my first child. The Marvel books continued to ship on time because I only have to turn in a script for them. I do far more behind the scenes stuff on my Image books and that's where the delays came in. I'm getting a better handle on it now. The schedule should be rock-solid throughout 2007... we'll see.

Greetings from the Great White North,

In my younger days I was what you might call a comiholic. My parents took me out every Saturday to the local variety store to by my weekly fix of Spiderman, Batman, Swamp Thing, Creepy, Superman, and so on.

Good parents.

But time marches on and I gave up my collection and moved on to novels and movies, leaving behind the illustrated worlds of my youth.

I married and had kids, and unlike me they never had the opportunity to read the comics that brought me so much joy.

Then one day on Ebay I noticed a Trade Paperback that caught my eye. It was the first collection of The Walking Dead, and from that time I've been hooked. I bought the next collection and then one title became two, two became three and... well you can guess the rest. I now subscribe to tons of titles and have made my online subscription service very happy. Even my kids are hooked now, and I have to defend my stash against the little stinkers, otherwise I'm searching for missing issues.

But by far my favorite comic is still The Walking Dead.

I find it as stimulating as any novel I've read, and as addicting as any TV show or movie series I've come across. Without the characters and story lines you've developed, I and my family would never have experienced what I feel is the rebirth of the comic industry.

Bravo people!!!

It's always nice to hear about this book getting people back into comics. That's probably the most rewarding kind of praise this book could get. Comics are a fantastic form of entertainment (my favorite) and it pains me that so many people have lost their way and given it up.

And I just finished reading issue №31.

WTF do you mean... a new chapter?!

Don't you dare kill off Rick!!
I just about crapped myself when you cut off his hand !!

Always a fan,
Frank Sperberg.

Wait a minute--DON'T kill Rick? You don't want me to kill him? Crap.

Dear Robert Kirkman,

In the hardcover of TWD you mention that "Night of the Living Dead" somehow fell into the public domain. I just saw a TV interview with the director, George Romero, and he answered that question. He was originally going to call the movie "Night of the Flesh Eaters." When he changed the title, the distributor changed the original title to NOTLD, but forgot to put the copyright notice on the film prints. At that time copyright law required it. Thus, lacking the notice, Romero eventually lost the copyright. The more you know.

Quick question so this isn't just a history lesson:
1. Will you ever deliberately release something of TWD into the public domain?

-Anthony Benitez

Why would I release any part of The Walking Dead into public domain? It'll be there in a hundred years or so anyway... but seriously, the zombies are in public domain (and plenty of people are making money on those) so there's really nothing else to give. Odd question. Thanks for the info on NOTLD though, I didn't know about all that.

See you back here next month!

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

What a way to close out an issue!! Amanda here, and I absolutely love the four pages of silence at the end of this one. The spread is an initial gut punch, but I think there's something equally chilling about the closeups too. They really capture the quiet eeriness of a place once lived in now being roamed by the dead, and kudos to Charlie for some of the little mundane details added to the walkers, like the glasses still delicately perched on one of them – makes you feel the weight of that punch even more. Like usual, we've got some old Hacks below, from way back when we were hoping for iPods for Christmas and MySpace was still around. RIP to the formative legends. Enjoy!

Don't worry, we're hard at work on issue 35... so you shouldn't have to wait more than a few weeks before you find out what's going on.

Heh.

Now, as I type this issue 32, 33 and now 34 have shipped monthly or better (unless the holidays hold this issue up at all). I just wanted to point it out because while everyone likes to point out and complain about lateness... even when we're BARELY late, very few people send in letters that say, "hey--you're on time, great!"

I'm not patting ourselves on the back just yet. We'll see how many issues we've put out by the end of 2007 before any medals are issued, but I think we're getting a handle on things and the worst is definitely behind us.

We did only put out nine issues in 2006... which sucks. Sorry about that.

We're shooting for 12 or MORE in 2007. You'll see.

My Christmas present for ME this year is a shorter letters column... so I can spend more time working on OTHER stuff... and maybe even spending some time with my family. I hope I get an iPod this year!

Okay... I might as well answer a FEW letters. Let's see what we got here.

HOLY CRAP!!! This book is so good...the escape was great, and I felt so bad for the doctor, but I guess someone had to bite it... and Michonne heading for revenge, that was sweet...and I really wanted to see that town just get torn apart, with someone letting zombies loose inside, but that's not Rick's style, so it makes sense that that wouldn't happen...but that doesn't mean Michonne won't... anyway, questions

1. What's going on back at the prison?

As you can see at the end of this very issue... nothing good.

2. What's gonna happen to this town? And will we see it?

We haven't seen the last of Woodbury by a long shot... don't worry. Woodbury and all the people still there will play a rather large role in the next year or two of stories in this book. I think you'll all like where this is going.

Anyway, that's about all I can think of...only 264 more issues to outrun Cerebus...and I'm hoping to be here until the end...

Mr Lumptastic

I'm hoping to be here until the end! We'll see how far we go. I'd love to be doing this book a decade from now.

Dear Ye Ol' Grizzly One,

Thanks for not making Glenn a total pussy. I appreciate it.

Yeah, Glenn's been a LITTLE wimpy in the last few issues but he's going to be getting some redemption later on. Glenn is one of my favorite characters in the book.

It seems like Walking Dead is losing a bit of its unpredictability. When I first read it, it seemed that anyone could go at anytime (and they did). Lately however, it seems like there are a few "sacred cows" i.e. Rick, Lori,

Tyreese, and to a lesser extent Hershel. It would be nice to see a few more shocker deaths to make the reader less comfortable.

Man, you guys are hard to please! I'm either killing too many characters or not enough. There are NO sacred cows in this book. Just because there hasn't been many people die in the last few issues doesn't mean certain characters are safe. You'll see... you'll ALL see.

That being said I'm still enjoying the hell out of this book. I think the prison idea was just about the most incredible idea in modern Zombie lore. I would like to see a few more of the minor characters get their moment in the spotlight, like Billy (that's Hershel's kid right??)

Yes, and I've been meaning to do more with him for some time. Don't worry, everyone will get at least a brief moment to shine at some point in the series... unless I kill them.

Couple of questions for ya:

1) Any chance of Lori just having a normal healthy baby? Or is it destined to be born Zombie-fied?

That remains to be seen. She may even give birth to that baby some day.

2) Any chance of visiting a Zombie Disney World/theme park of some sort?

Yes... that's the big event for issue 100.

3) Carol has gone batshit crazy. Can you kill her please?

What would be the fun in that.

4) What's the long term plan for prison life? Is this going to be a permant HQ?

Would you leave were you in their situation?

5) Can we expect Rick to gain a Chainsaw for a right hand anytime soon?

Maybe a laser gun... not a chainsaw.

Thanks Robert. One of these days, gussy up your friggin myspace page!

Zach Langlois

Oh, yeah... that thing. Uh... maybe some day. I actually hate MySpace pages with so much shit on them you can't read them... and that damn music that starts up when you look at the page... ugh.

I'll put a sunburst or a rainbow or something on

mine someday. Until then it'll be super boring and super plain.

Mr Kirkman,

Big fan of Walking Dead. A friend gave me the tpb of the first 6 issues and I've been hooked since. Big Romero fan (once slept in a car in a rest stop in Kenosha Wisconsin to meet him) and big zombie fan. Knew I liked your stuff after reading the book and Marvel Zombies. But when I read in the letter column that you hated bendis, I knew you are special. :) What do you think of Civil War?

I don't hate Bendis, in fact, I love him. I just like to give him shit in the letters columns of my books because I know that bald troll will more than likely never read them.

Just to jump off on a tangent, I think Brian had a pretty big hand in getting me work at Marvel which was a big kick start to my career at a time when THE WALKING DEAD and INVINCIBLE were just starting to take off. Brian is a great guy and he's helped me out a lot over the years.

That doesn't change that fact that he's so silly looking.

While reading issue №30, I was thinking about something. When the group was on the tower taking out zombies it made me think of a thought I had one time in regards to the original Dawn of the Dead. Just as a mental exercise I was trying to "correct" any mistakes the group made. One of the ideas I had was to go out and kill some of the surrounding zombies just to thin the crowd and to give a warning to anyone coming by. Some zombie heads on lances might discourage others wanting to take away the mall. I was going to email you this idea, but in the letter column you mention the idea that none of the group had ever seen a zombie movie. Guess it just goes to show great minds think alike. :)

Enjoying the series, can't wait to see what happens when Rick and Michonne get out of town and back to the prison. If I may make one suggestion, I really liked the "cast so far" head shots & short descriptions you had at the end of the book. I realize it got very very long and unwieldy, but you don't have to include everyone. As much as I liked little Duane Jones (since I was a late comer, did anyone get that in joke/homage?), you don't need to include everyone. Maybe just the crew and "special guest stars" (as they used to say on TV shows). Interesting use of the prison as a setting, never would have thought of it but it makes sense.

The character list will be back shortly. If not next issue... then soon. I just need to take the time to update it.

Well, in closing, keep up the good work and keep the zombies up also. One last question, since you have an "ensemble" cast, do you like any of the ensemble dramas on television like Lost or Battlestar Galactica?

Best,
Butch Rosenbalm

I'm a huge fan of LOST. I know I'm going to LOVE Battlestar Galactica when I finally get around to buying the DVDs but I haven't had a chance to pick them up yet.

Yo, Zombie Dude!

Ok, just for the record I have TWD hard cover signed and numbered 18...SWEET!

Yes-I read it all the way through in one shot, yes-I loved the 3 page promo, yes-I wish a zombie would bite me so I could eat brains, yes-I have questions!

1. If they made a zombie James Bond movie would they make him only eat hot chicks?

I think that's in the by-laws.

2. Do you listen to white zombie when you write or go driving or ever? The first album was best! Lots of zombie movie sampling!

For whatever reason I never really listened to White Zombie. I had friends that did--and I always liked it--but I never bought a CD.

3. I totally agree that if this is ever going into film production that it should be a hardcore hbo/like tv series and it could be like you said, never ending...mmm brains!

This is not a question.

4. what kind of monkey brains are safe to eat? or like a delicacy in some countries?

Only the smart monkeys have brains that are safe to eat.

Sorry I got zombies on my brain...
Rob Steal

We all do. It's okay.

Loved the story in the Image 2005 holiday special--no zombies and a good way to see how they survived that long--nice touch! Cannot wait for the hardcover and the script book to come out. A few questions:

1. Have you ever thought about a Walking Dead fiction book/novel or series?

I've thought about it. There aren't any plans for it right now.

2. Will there be more script books?

Probably before the end of 2006.

3.BRAINS.....UH....HEHE....POSTERS?
Please!!!

We'll see...

BTW, nice to see what you look like in the recent issue of Wizard. It's about damn time they gave you more notice! Anyway, happy holidays and thanks for a great book!

Sincerely,
Bobby W. Chamberlain

For all the flak that Wizard gets for not covering anything non-Marvel or DC I should say that they've always been very kind to this book.

I have written in before and you published me, so fingers crossed I make the cut again... I wanted to email you to tell you about some zombie paraphernalia that I'm sure you already know about.

1. Dead Rising on XBOX 360 is amazing

I'll probably check that out one day.

2. Max Brooks came out with his next zombie book, World War Z - An Oral History of the Zombie War. Haven't read it yet but the Zombie Survival Guide is a piece of literature that will save a man's life.

It's on my to-read list.

Well, that's it. Honestly, who makes a list with only two items. By the way I love how you are putting illustrations of zombies on the back covers of your comics now. I would totally do the chick on the back of Issue 31. She might be a biter though...

Eric Baca
Zombie Conservationist Extraordinaire

Did you just admit that you would have sex with a dead woman? I bet you're not glad I printed this letter NOW!

Kirkman,

I recently saw this straight-to-dvd B-list zombie flick called "Feeding the Masses". It came out sometime in 2005, and I was surprised at how good it was. There're some really funny moments, mixed in with mass media/government manipulation of society commentary... Anyway, I recommend getting a hold of it if you haven't seen it.

Oh yeah, and TWD rocks.

David Siegler

Ladies and Gentlemen... meet David, the PRODUCER of Feeding the Masses. (not really.)

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Since Walking Dead I'm a huge fan of your work. I read a couple of comics before, but never realized you'd written them. WD is the first book I read every month and usually after that I can't wait for the next one. I wanted to write before, but I also wanted to do some fanart, the one thing I miss seeing in WD. First thing that came to my mind was a simple pin-up, but that was too easy. So I decided to do a little strip, called... Walking Dad. I guess it was too obvious, it was already done over in Invincible. It took me a long time to come up with a new one. But then I had the idea. The result is attached, hope you like AND print it!

Sadly, I do not print fan-art or pin-ups in this book. I hate turning people down and it's frustrating on Invincible, so I figured I'd save myself the headache on this book.

Some other things:

1) I can't believe you don't like KISS, maybe you should listen to some of their tracks and realize, you know a lot of them!

I know plenty of them. I don't HATE them... they're just not my cup of tea.

2) I really liked the Cliff Rathburn pin-up (in №25), I'd like to see interpretations of other pencilers in future issues.

Ryan Ottley may be doing one with Cliff at some point.

3) How about lowering the cover price of WD (\$1.99, like Fell)? I guess even more readers would join the ever-growing army of Reading Dead.

Each issue of THE WALKING DEAD has nearly ten more pages of story than Fell. So they would be a hefty cut in our page rates if we were to do that. Also, I'm not entirely sure that dropping a dollar off the price would get more people to read the book. There have been plenty of books in the past with lower price tags that just don't sell. I'd wager that the quality of Fell is a far more important factor in its success.

4) How about a small "thus far" caption in the beginning of every issue?

Done.

5) The story is absolutely perfect and has exactly the right amount of zombie-action, don't change a thing!

Don't plan to.

6) Love the artwork, Mr. Adlard does a good job. If he ever wants to leave (hope not), Matt Tyree (Tales of the Realm) would be a cool replacement!

Yeah, I dig Matt's stuff. He was fun to work with.

Thank you for taking the time to read, keep up the good work and buy my books... uh, print my fanart,

Andreas Günster

No can do, pal. I hope you understand.

Dear Robert "Don't Call Me Bob" Kirkman,

Please don't call me that. ;-)

Seems like you're getting a ton of letters from fans that proclaim The Walking Dead to be the best comic there is. Well, I'm here to set the record straight. TWD is not the best comic-Invincible is.

Have I printed this letter before?

I do love me some TWD though. After I discovered the greatness of Invincible, I bought the first three trades of TWD before I read a single page of it. That's a risky venture you know. What if I read the first trade and it stank? I'd be stuck with three stinky trades, and I'd be pissed about wasting my money. Fortunately it didn't stink, it rocked!

It took me a little longer to try Marvel Team-up. I wouldn't try it, because I think that the Scott Kolins covers are pug-fugly! (You'll probably interject to stick up for Scott, because you're cool like that, but sorry you're wrong. Please don't cuss at me.) (*Scott Kolins is a fantastic artist.*) I did finally read some MTU though, and it rocks too. I learned then to never doubt The Kirkman, and I've been buying up back issues of anything you wrote. Most of it is pretty great.

On a different note, I was one of those Mormon Missionaries, and I spent some time in Lexington. I wonder if I ever knocked on your door. Were you that guy who threatened to shoot me, if I didn't get off your property? I have an idea. If you want to make up for threatening to kill me you can have Charlie Adlard draw a Mormon Missionary zombie in an issue of TWD. Y'know, put a bike helmet on his head, have him wearing a short sleeved dress shirt, and the black name tag on the chest pocket. The tag could say Elder Ottley. Ha! That would be awesome!

I don't think I've ever had one of those missionaries come to my door. You guys don't seem to be doing your job from where I sit. If I end up going to hell because of you... I'm going to be totally pissed.

Now quit reading letters and get to sleep. You need to scale back on the letters page before you burnout.

I need you to stay fresh. If you burnout, you might commit some heinous crime against humanity, like take a hiatus, and that simply won't do.

Brad Linford

PS Congrats on making Wizard's Top 10 writers. You deserve it. Also, Capes is righteous, keep doing the backup stories in Invincible, and bring back Brit.

More Brit is on the way. Did I say that?

Robert,

Just read 31. Michonne rocks, don't kill her off for a while. I'm looking forward to learning more about her back story. Her conduct in the fight...getting to see her make the Governor's life hell before she gets her final revenge is nice. Can't wait for her to get that bastard.

Hopefully you liked the next issue.

The Walking Dead is like crack. Everyone I recommend it to gets hooked on it. Letter Hacks is one of the best letter columns in comics right now, tied with The Goon and BPRD as my favorite. Invincible kicks ass, too, and as a catholic school dropout and former altar boy I can't help but love Battle Pope.

As an Ant-man fan, I was wondering if the new series is going to be an ongoing or a mini? Looking forward to it either way.

Oh, it's an ongoing series. Hopefully it'll go for a good long time.

A few zombie movie recommendations (since you asked and all):

Cemetery Man aka Dellamorte Dellamore (excellent surreal black comedy featuring Anna Falchi's boobs)

Versus (karate/yakuza/samurai/zombie flick from Japan)

Wild Zero (Japanese punk rock zombiefest starring the band Guitar Wolf)

Dead Alive aka Braindead (Peter Jackson's best movie and the goriest movie of all time)

Return of the Living Dead ("Send more Paramedics"...nuff said)

Dawn of the Dead '79 (not obscure, but my favorite)

Thanks for hours of awesome zombie goodness and keep up the good work.

Brad Parker

All good recommendations, thanks.

I'll see you back here next month for more happy go lucky FUN...

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, readers! Amanda here. The highs and lows within THE WALKING DEAD continue. This is nothing new, but the ebb and flow of tension in this issue is enough to give you whiplash! In all the craziness, it also features one of my favorite Glenn moments -- tracking down a ring for Maggie. It's so wholesome and so genuine, even as he's searching through a pile of corpses. That's true love, people! I want to end on a high note, so before we find out where Martinez is, let's dive into some old Letter Hacks back from February 2007.

We're on the cusp of being on schedule for the first time in a while! Again, I apologize for the sporadic shipping schedule of 2006. So far, 2007 is looking to totally make up for it though--but enough about boring schedule stuff.

CLAYBURN MOORE sculptor extraordinaire (and sculptor of those lovely WALKING DEAD zombie busts) has recently completed his full-sized, full-body RICK GRIMES statue! I promise we'll be showing you photos VERY VERY soon, but for now, let me just say--IT'S TOTALLY DAMN AWESOME!! Granted, I would probably say that if it wasn't--I mean, we need to sell these things, and I really like Clayburn--but I PROMISE this statue will blow you away. It's simply amazing.

I'll have price, ordering info and release dates for you very soon--so stay tuned!

Now--enough of that--let's answer us a bit of mail.

Hil

I discovered Walking dead long time ago in a comics shop in France. Comics in original version are hard to find, and zombie comics are more hard to find!

Actually, there are just the 1 to 6 issues

which are translated in French. Sadly, the company who was in charge to translate is out of business and I'm in obligation to buy comics from England or USA.

Do you think that one day, another company will translate the comics in French?

I'm told DELCOURT will be taking over the French language publication of the book. I'm tickled pink--I LOVE Delcourt.

In other ways, I'm a fan of all that talking about zombies, and I think you've done the best zombie's comic I've ever read! Keep doing good job!

Laurence

Thanks for writing--keep on the lookout for the Delcourt edition of the book.

This one is gonna be a quicky... just wanted to let you know issue 33 made my stomach churn and feel bad after reading it. That was utterly disgusting. I LOVED IT!!! Keep it up cuz I bloody love this book.

Mr Lumptastic

It made my stomach turn, too. I'm glad you liked it.

Dear Kirkman,

Holy Shat, issue 33 was amazing. I always wondered how sadistic Michonne was. It kinda makes me wonder if she's done this before. Even though it went by so fast, I had to look over every square inch of each scene numerous times to grasp it all. By far this is my favorite issue. Keep up the good work.

-Shane Marsh

Thanks.

Yo, Letter hacks,

I just read issue №32 and I can't believe it, but the book just keeps getting better. There's always a fear in the back of my head that the book will jump the shark or get boring and it just never happens. This is one of the only comics where an entire issue can be nothing but talk and still kick ass. Kirkman, you're my favourite writer in comics right now (This excludes Stan Lee), keep up the good work, man. Also, Charlie keeps getting better and better, I don't even miss Tony any more and that is saying something; I'm most definitely picking up "Rock Bottom". Now I got some questions.

1) Glenn and Maggie obviously have sex pretty often. Are they using protection or taking any measures to make sure Maggie doesn't get pregnant or what?

They bury a potato in the prison yard in the light of the full moon every month. That pretty much takes care of things. Really--it WORKS!

2) Michonne is the most badass character in the book. I love that the Governor didn't break her spirit and that she went back for revenge; she's a great character, but how do you pronounce her name? I've been saying (mish-own-e). Is that right?

I've said it like that before, but I'm told it's actually ME-SHAWN by people who actually know things about the French language. It's a French name--and I like it... that's really all I know. If any readers have a better interpretation I'd love to hear it.

3) Was Lori such a bitch before the dead started rising or did that happen after?

Heh.

4) Any chance you could talk your boy McFarlane into producing a Walking Dead action figure set? We could get Rick with hatchet and removable hand, Michonne with katana and zombie companions, and of course, a talking Lori figure who bitches when you press her button. Please?

I'll see what I can do. Don't hold your breath just yet, though.

5) Andrew ran off like a punk, if I recall. With the prison being so close to Woodbury, any chance the Governor got his ass?

Who knows--it's certainly possible.

6) Do you have one of those old school nicknames like they used to do in old Marvel books? Like "Rocksteady" Robert or "Kooky" Kirkman or somethin'? You need one, man, only then are you official.

I have yet to be issued such a nickname.

7) Is Rick gonna get a groovy chain-saw to fight off the Evil Dead?

Nope--but thanks for playing.

Alright, thanks for taking the time.

P.S. Invincible №33 was one of the single best superhero comics I ever read in my life. No shit.

P.P.S. I been reading comics since I was a kid and this is the first letter I've ever sent to one.

P.P.P.S. Sorry, but I gotta say, Ant-Man №2 was FUCKED UP. That guy is really irredeemable.

Peace,
Jamal A. Shakir

Yeah--you should all be out there buying The Irredeemable Ant-Man!

Kirkman,

I want to start this out by saying I'm a huge fan of INVINCIBLE - I honestly think it's the best comic being published right now. It is superbly paced, it always features action of some sort, and its characters are archetypal without being stereotypical; it's excellent.

Now for the criticism: I have been following THE WALKING DEAD since issue one. I was a huge fan of the Zombie genre in those days, and I loved it from the moment I picked it up. But that love has been dwindling steadily since Rick & Company reached the prison complex. I understand that the Warren Ellis-ization of comics has been going on for nearly a decade now, but c'mon Kirkman! The decompression is KILLING ME on this book. Issue thirty-two encompasses a whole fifteen minutes in the lives of the characters, which would

be fine if it didn't equate to a month of my life spent waiting. By my count, this story arc has been going on for eight issues, from the moment the helicopter first appeared. It could have been done in three. The result is that twenty five percent of the issues contain five percent of the total storyline. To me, this is a major disappointment's from a book that seemed positively incredible after issue five.

Ryan Dolley,
Detroit MI

I seriously doubt the story from 25 to 32 could be told--without cutting out important stuff, in three issues. You're certainly entitled to your opinion, but I'm just not sure that's an accurate statement. There will always be an important 30 minutes in this series--that DESERVES a whole issue--and then there will be issues that take place over a matter of weeks.

But this ISN'T a finite series that's building toward a climactic end.

This series is about the journey and experiences of the characters--and when something important is happening to them--that will have immense consequences on future issues... I'm going to take my time.

Kirkman,

From the Desk of the Governor,

Memo to self- Next time a wild-eyed woman with a samurai sword shows up, DO NOT SCREW WITH HER!!!

God DAMN, that was effin' BRUTAL!!!
Keep up the good work.

Shawn Michael Scott
Brandon, FL

Thanks.

Mr. Kirkman,

This was the most sickening and disgusting thing I have ever seen in a comic book. Kirkman you are sick for writing it, Adlard is sick for drawing it and let me not forget Mr. Rathburn.

Keep up the good work guys!
Raymond Singh

Are you not sick for reading it?

Kirkman,

I love your comics, Walking Dead and Invincible. Issue 33 was very intense. My question is probably obvious but I must ask anyway, does Michonne suffer from multiple personalities? I could not tell if she was faking or not at the end of the issue.

Have a great day,

Joe Hampton

You want me to just give something like that away here in the letters column? All I'll say is that it certainly SEEMS that way right now--doesn't it?

I want to thank you for not shying away from your depiction of the governor's torture in issue 33. I abhor violence in real life and am therefore often conflicted about reading comics that employ violence in their stories. Often violence is obscured or stylized in such a way as to make it more palatable, but your comic reminded me that I have the same concerns in seeing Batman beat up a crook as I do in this torture scene.

This issue made me reconsider my overall reading habits; I too easily ignore my apprehensions in search of entertainment. I considered giving up TWD after Michonne was raped and tortured in 28/29. The portrayal of violence was unsettling and left me concerned, but I recognized that this could be intended as a literary device, so I stayed to see your conclusion--after all, I haven't been able to anticipate where your storylines have proceeded. I was hoping for an end I found both entertaining and congruent with my ethical views (though I certainly didn't have one in mind!), but instead it appears I was simply to be made to hate the governor in order for the torture issue to provide a climax. I won't accept the use of violence as a payoff for violence.

Individuals do things I find reprehensible, and in a setting such as the world of TWD it is easy to see how people's baser instincts

may more easily be expressed. I understand that these are fictional characters working within this world, but you and I are very much real and have responsibilities to ourselves and others. As such, I feel that to satisfy my personal ethics I cannot continue to support this book, even though I usually find it so engrossing and entertaining. I am headed back to my comic shop to return this issue and remove the title from my pull list. I'm not sure which titles will follow TWD off my list; I recognize that these concerns are applicable to many other works.

Thank you for considering my views. I hope they at least engender discussion; I know I have much to reassess myself.

Best wishes,
Dan Felty

Different strokes for different folks, I suppose. Violence is a part of life, a part of history—it's written into our very genetic code. You've never been angry enough to punch a wall? You're going to have a HARD time avoiding violence in the world we live in. The Walking Dead should be the LEAST of your worries.

Good luck.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

After reading Walking Dead 33, I've been debating for the past day whether to drop the series entirely. The graphic, extended portrayal of the torture suffered by the mayor, while understandable from a storytelling perspective, simply struck me as too much of a descent into torture for torture's sake. Even worse, it smacks of lazy writing; such a detailed descent into gore seems to indicate an inability to more succinctly portray the savagery of Michonne's revenge (and the further dehumanization this revenge may unleash upon her). While I can understand the need to graphically portray the horror of living in a world filled with zombies, this past story arc has moved beyond supernatural cruelty to a kind of voyeuristic torture porn, one that I don't enjoy reading. While I've ultimately decided to stick around to see what the next few issues might bring (reluctantly, I might add), if the series continues to seek stomach-turning instead of storytelling, well, I'm hope the new fans

you attract are sufficient to replace the ones who've left.

Sincerely,
James Seidler

"Voyeuristic torture porn." I wonder if we can put that on the cover.

The sum of the story of The Walking Dead is far greater than one part. I find it bizarre, frankly, that a long time reader can read ONE ISSUE and start to worry the series will be that way from now on. If I did an issue that was light-hearted and had jokes in it, would you worry this was becoming a comedy book? I think issues 34, 35 and 36 have proven that the Woodbury arc, while having vast repercussions on the overall story of the series, have NOT changed the book to an unrecognizable degree.

Have a LITTLE faith.

Man, Kirkmonster....

I knew Michonne would exact her own form of revenge if she got the chance but never in darkest side of my mind did I envision what happened in issue №33. (Okay, I actually did envision it that way but I have to pretend my mind doesn't go that dark.) Man, she really put it to the man, so to speak and all of his various man parts. Well, after what he did to her, he deserved all that and maybe more. It would be amazing if he managed to pull through just to see what kind of crap he would try to pull next. I don't see how he is going to do that though. The various infections he should get from the things Michonne did (especially the spoon) probably will kill him if he doesn't die from shock.

That's what I'm saying.

Kirkman, I know you have to be channeling the zombie universe into your brain at night while you sleep. There is no way a nice boy from Kentucky could ever come up with this stuff...

You'd be surprised.

Keep on writing. I think maybe The Walking Dead is my favorite comic mag in the universe (don't worry, Invincible is right up there with it).

I hope you keep The Walking Dead walking for years to come.

Sincerely,
Michael

That's the plan--we want to keep this thing going well past issue 300!

Hey Robert,

Issue 33 sure was great, but that is not what this letter is about. First I want to thank you for your recommendations you gave me a few issues back, I sure you don't remember but I was the guy who sent you the letter about how I was boycotting Image because of the whole Todd and Neil thing over Miracleman. I have added quite a few titles to my monthly pull now, everything from Girls to Invincible to Fell. I can't believe what I was missing. Don't get me wrong, I would love Neil to finish his story, but damn, I was really missing out. Secondly, I want back and reread the whole series and I think I noticed something so I have a few questions:

1) In issue 20, is that Thomas's dead body that the other zombie gets his intestine caught on and falls?

YES IT IS! I think you're the first to notice this. Good eye.

2) If it is, how the hell did he get his glasses back on, at the end of issue 18 when Maggie shoots him he is not wearing them.

I think it's pretty obvious that he had a back-up pair in his pocket.

3) Is our gang going to go out looking for other survivors or try to contact anyone else after what Rick, Michonne and Glenn just went thru, I mean they all can't be bad (can they)?

I think survival is the priority now--no need to find more people until you can safely live with the people you have.

Well that's all for now, oh yeah one last thing, I have been selling cars for about 5 years now, and if this comic thing doesn't work out give me a call, Big ugly guys like you do pretty well (just kidding)

Erik Porter

Did you just call me UGLY? I know for a fact and am a quite handsome dude. Next time I get shit like that from you I'm totally not printing your letter.

And that's it for this month! I'll see you back here in a week or so for issue 36.

No--really.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello readers! Amanda here, and back again for this edition of Deluxe Letter Hacks. For an issue that contains a very adorable proposal, it's also a somber one with some pretty heavy stuff. What's very clear by the end is that the group's dealings with Woodbury aren't over yet, surely Rick's choice to chase down Martinez will have no further fallout, right? This also wraps up another story arc and a run of awesome covers by Mike Del Mundo. Starting with #37, Stephen Platt will be coming in with an epic connecting set over the next six issues. Be sure to check them out! Until then, enjoy some of these old letters, we'll be answering new mail next issue.

Be back here very soon for issue 37. We're monthly or better from here on out—you watch!

Not a lot of time right now as this issue needs to go to the printer and this letters column is looking to be a long one—so here goes!

On to the mail!

Wow, first let me say that you are the 2nd comic book writer I have ever written to. The first being Mike Carey after the final issue of his Lucifer series. You are easily my favorite writer next to him and your series Walking Dead was the lynch-pin that re-entered my mind back into the world of comic books. So thank you for all your work.

That being said.

WOW!

I just finished reading №33 of Walking Dead and I was completely floored. I knew at the end of №32 that the Governor was going to get some come uppin's, but never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined the torture he went through. I have never shouted "WHOA!" at a comic book before and this issue was simply amazing. It was just brilliant writing and Charlie Adlard is also brilliant with the way he interpreted

everything you put out there. And the cliffhanger with the governor's demise was priceless. I didn't really care for him at first (besides for the obvious reasons) but now I simply can't wait to hear what has finally happened to him.

Thank you so much. Your writing has affected me like only a select few have...

Ben Beesley

Thanks for the kind words, Ben—I'm glad you enjoyed the issue.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

Hey, wasn't this issue just a liiiittle sadistic?

Sure the guvnor did bad things to Michonne, but nothing like that, right?? And that was the whole issue! Hopefully this is the end of Woodbury and we can get back to the real cast, huhn? Some real drama there, but best to bury it all.

As for Ant-Man, in regards to my letter (and your response) printed in TWD №33, well, Stan Lee may have created Ant-Man, yes. But as I recall he gave him several colors on the original costume: Red, some blue and, you guess it—Black! Spider-Man is going back in black too, ya know. I'm looking forward to another Kirkman series soon, maybe at Image! Not that I know there's gonna be one, it's just, I want there to be one. Yeah. Hey maybe Michonne will stay violent and turn psycho-killer back at the prison, huh? Who was that little girl, anyway? The guvnor's daughter? How'd she break down that door in that one scene? Cause it looked like she did anyway. So, again, a down issue this time. I think for one issue a month, we deserve more dialog than this! Oh, and I think you should write Ultimate Spider-Man, too! That is if BMB ever comes up for air.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Did you say NEW SERIES?! Surely by now you've all heard about THE ASTOUNDING WOLF-MAN?! It's my new creator-owned series from Image, debuting on MAY 7th--that's right--FREE COMIC BOOK DAY. That means the first issue of this cool new series is ABSOLUTELY FREE! No need to gamble on a new series and waste those hard-earned bucks. Just swing by your local retailer and grab a copy of issue 1. If you like it, come back later and buy issue 2. If you don't like it--you have no soul and should seek spiritual help.

MAY 7th!!

Mr. Kirkman,

Michonne goes HARD CORE! Yikes. I was expecting her to go Postal on the Gov', but this issue has got to be the most violence I have ever enjoyed in all my years of reading comics. "When I nailed your Prick to the board." I had to pause and let that sink in for a minute or two. I flashed back to the scene in Pulp Fiction where Butch goes back to save Marsellus from the clutches of the guys with the Gimp, only Michonne uses the hardware she picked up. The spoon goes from the ass blaster, to the eye ball popper. My only complaint is that the sword on the floor looks to be really close to the Gov' - he shouldn't have needed to dive for it, but I can forgive.

Yeah--cut us some slack on that one. Thanks.

Crazy shit like this is why I love WD. I started with issue 18, and was hooked. Had to run back to Comics Etc. in Rochester, NY and pick up all the TPB and back issues that I could score. Thank you for putting out such a compelling mag. How about a little WD Giant Sized issue in the near future? You know your man-friend Bendis did it in Powers - I don't think that the WD should be out done, do you?

I think the chances of me being outdone by BENDIS these days have dwindled down to slim and none. You're a HACK, B!! ;-)

Can't wait to see round II. You know the Gov' won't die from these flesh wounds, would he?

Thanks for writing my favorite monthly,
Andrew Cup

The current health status of the Governor remains to be seen.

Hey Kirkman--

Thanks for crossing my line.

I've been not writing a letter about Michonne for what seems a long time now. I'm pretty sure I scribbled something about high hopes for her character when the first cover with her was previewed. Kind of didn't matter what her story was, I just wanted it to start. But issue after issue, the story never really got into her point of view or spent very much time even around her. But whatever, you know? Month after month each issue was 1) always over way too fast, 2) awesome-lookin', and c) always provocative. You couldn't ask for more. Sometimes I've been frustrated (by my own unfulfilled desires), sometimes thrilled, but the letter (about Michonne and/or everything else that was/is happening in TWD and it's place and comment in our ongoing times yadda yadda) never got written.

Mostly because it didn't have to be. Because I was in good hands. I might want this or that to proceed at a different pace, wish this or that had gone differently, but that's life. Where other comics make me think, "That guy doesn't know shit about shit," when they're frustrating me -- you know, like I have such a deeper understanding about how things would REALLY go in a world where people wear costumes or whatever -- by contrast the frustrations you've presented in TWD always seemed... like the frustrations of life.

Immutable. Deaf to a plea. But also real, and better faced-up-to than imagined away -- a tactic that's never worked. I would read the frustrated letters and laugh, or rail in your defense; jackass clowns, angry that you weren't taking their psychic story notes.

Aw, man, and then you went for Michonne's rape arc. Rape in entertainment is so tired to me. But what is zombie fiction about, if not the question of who we are, and what would all-of-us-among-us become if unfettered by law and institutionalized power? And rape by despots is a trope in zombie fiction by that very principle. Predators are certainly among us still. But I didn't like it. ...but I didn't write, either.

Because I'm not going to get everything I want, much less when (vicariously) living in the zombie apocalypse. Still, it smarted; here I feel that I've been patiently waiting to get to the Michonne storyline, and it's this. It stinks. Oh, well. Figgered, Michonne'll get her revenge and then we can move on -- hopefully to who she is and what her deal is, although right about now I'm really wondering what's going on back with the others.

But here we are at issue №33 (imagine my surprise walking into some comic shop on a Friday and seeing the cover, after having been to MY *unnamed* shop Wednesday and not seen it!) and it gets to the torture of the Governor. And it's sweet vengeance. Now Kirkman, this is where we get to you crossing my "line" and all. Looks like I finally had to write. Here I thought we were deep in my touchy territory with the rape and that I was going to be able to ride it out. But my experience reading this torture issue was a real harrower, from the anticipation when I flipped through the first few pages, thinking, "Oh, yeah! Here we go..." I loved it. And I wanted it. And I didn't want it to be short. I wanted you to take your time (and see, it's checkmate Michonne in three pages -- and SHE wants her time, too). Talk about getting what you wish for.

Thing of it is, I do believe there is a kernel of hate at the core of the human psyche. Dark times have been the context in which TWD operates since it first hit the shelves, and Regis Christ! Kirkman, has shit just been getting heavier and heavier, or what? I can only imagine that having a newborn gives you a vibrant point of reference for the things happening both inside and without the United States these last years, and their implications for the future. It's that dark core of humanity's which is ascendant right now, institutionalized, and which has led us to where we are. Now that I think of it, Romero's DAY OF THE DEAD is the story I associate with my first instance of that sort of rogue militia-crazy, intimate physical threat vibe that resonates throughout the late Governor's story arc. And DOTD was released in '85, when the fruits of what Reagan (and Thatcher) was doing (with tax cuts to the super-rich leading to the gutting of national reserves, the unfettering of corporate desires, and seeding international terror with the Central American death squads and Afghanistan and whatnot) and which

have led us directly to where we are today, would just be starting to show. But only just. And only if you were paying attention. Romero's prescience is staggering.

Whoo boy am I long-winded in getting to the point. Sorry, Kirkman. Didn't mean to get my politics in your comics. Mmm... they taste great together! (sorrysorry, couldn't help myself) But it does get to my point. I feel like there's also great hope and capacity for love in humans. That part's getting its ass kicked in the bigger picture right now. All around. So I guess I'm feeling a little sensitive about the whole Mitchum Love-Hate thing is all. You know, feeling like we're fighting to keep the humane part of humanity's proverbial head above water and there you go walking me deep into real identification with hate.

And that, in half a dozen nutshells, is why I write. To give thanks. For not being tepid or half-assed in these times of particularly tepid, half-assed entertainment. For taking me places that I don't want to go, in ways that I can't but help understand. Here's to hoping you find the forces of hope slugging away in there when you look inside your head, Kirkman.

Because that's what we need.

Some lingering thoughts on the progeny of DAY OF THE DEAD... The dovetailing fears of the rogue militia and rape have become a constant in zombie fiction, escalating in excess long after the insight has been wrung dry (good ol' rape never gets old). This particular manifestation has come to dominate as the face of evil in the imagined future. Most recently in popular fiction, 28 DAYS LATER and Briane Keene's pedestrian CITY OF THE DEAD come to mind. Cannonized, calcsified and brittle -- even if it IS the odds-on favorite of how things might play out today. So I read Stephen King's CELL last weekend, not expecting to like it (even though I consider King to have been "back" for a number of years now); the cell phone angle is really corny in my mind. But it turns out King takes a fresh swing at what to do with that kernel of hate at the center of mankind's mind. And that cell phone angle works, and has some real cultural frisson about it. He's a Master. He knows how to give you the iconic genre stuff you want, but also throw it around in unexpected ways. And he telescopes his rules for proximity

throughout in a way that I thought was fucked up (in the good way).

Oh, and have you checked out the movie DEAD CREATURES? It's British, '01, regular city girls, slowly rotting away in the underground, watching TV and eating "leftovers" from tupperware. But not cutesy at all! I think it's about the fears they were having about Mad Cow. Not the world's best film, but ripe with interesting ideas and a personal zombie favorite.

And we couldn't possibly move on without commenting on the Adlard/Rathburn team. Outstanding. It's like they keep getting... deeper. And Adlard's characterizations and performances keep notching up. Good stuff. A major part of what I'm looking forward to, issue to issue.

Wow--I see we're getting to some questions in a minute and wanted to say thanks for writing such a long damn letter! It means a lot to me to have someone spending so much of their time on something like this. It's a real testament to your love for the book and it really warms my heart.

Although, I must say, I was reading going "he hates it, no he likes it, no he hates it, no he—" boy is my head spinning. Anyway-- onto your questions.

QUESTION! Do you have a take on what's caused the outbreak? I'm not asking for it, just, do YOU have any leading theories?

Honestly, I would never nail something like this down until I had to WRITE it and I don't ever plan on writing it. There's a number of causes in my head and few scenes I have in mind to explain things--but I don't see any reason to nail things down to a definitive answer until it has to be committed to the page. And since that will never happen...

QUESTION! Do you know who any of the characters in other, untold parts of this world would be? Or do you know what other storylines you would pursue (in a world where you were writing other TWD stories)?

There are certainly other people out there in the rest of the world. We will never see ALL of them in this title, though.

QUESTION! Do the cry babies that whine about the release schedule know that they

should just be giving thanks for getting that good shit every time?

Well, I'm fine with people complaining about the schedule when we fall behind-- that just means they want to read the book--and that's what I WANT. But I hope they stop complaining SOON because this book is so on schedule now.

QUESTION! Will we be finding out more about Michonne soon? Ever? Will she be playing larger role in the community? (I'm assuming there's a there to go back there to... watch, the prison is in flames)

We'll learn more about Michonne as the story continues, I promise.

QUESTION! Where/how can I see this TWD Christmas episode?

I just printed it in issue 34. Hope you liked it.

QUESTION! Hahaha! People still think you bit 28 Days!

Sandra Bullock rocks.

QUESTION! At the Prison, did Michonne ever work out or practice forms and stances outside? Where the others might watch?

If she did--we didn't see it.

QUESTION! When will anyone ask Michonne to teach them some martial arts? Do you have a take on specific styles she knows? Or is she just an angry woman who stumbled across a sword?

She doesn't know any formal martial arts. She took fencing in college.

QUESTION? More kung fu!

I'll see what I can do.

QUESTION! How PSYCHED are you for Tony Moore's return to FEAR AGENT? AND their plans to trade arcs between him and Opena?

I'm psyched to see Tony drawing ANY comic. I wish they came out more frequently.

Keep up the good work, Kirkman. This is one of a tiny number of titles that I look forward to with real anticipation. So where are we going now?

thanks again,
Andrew Garcia-Price

We're going on to the next letter, you long-winded fool!

Just wanted to let you know that Michonne getting pay back on the governor was justified!!! Great story line and keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Bobby W. Chamberlain

P.S. what if that guy helping them escape is a spy leading the town to the prison?

You may be onto something.

Kirkman,

First off, thanks for writing this book. I came in around issue 16 or 17. I was bored and had down time between jobs in the field and I stopped by a record shop that sold comics. I asked the guy if there were any zombie comics and he directed me to TWD. Out of curiosity I purchased a couple of issues and read them in the parking lot. I was instantly hooked and continued to read the second one while driving, yikes! I think most people remember what they were doing while they read their first WD comic; it's like remembering where you were on 9/11.

Not QUITE the same, but go on...

Subsequently I returned to a larger comic book store (The Comic Bug, in Manhattan Beach, Ca, which to my dismay partially burned down due to a fire at the cleaners next door). Anyways, I bought the TPB's and caught up immediately and have read them every month since then. Returning to the store I have also begun to follow DMZ, Y, Invincible, Goon and a few others. I even bought TWD issue number one on ebay for about \$55.00. Will you be at Comicon in 2007? I'd like to have it signed! Anyhow, here are a few questions/ grievances.

I'll be there. I'm sure I can be found at the Image booth or the Marvel booth at various times during the con.

1.) To the guys that were offended by Michonne's rape and torture, let me remind you that Morgan is raising his son Duane. It would have been such a cliché if his mother was raising him and his father had been out of his life since he was an infant. Tyreese was democratically elected to lead the group, Rick was not, so an african-american man is now the leader of the group. Also, if you had to be stuck in zombie central, I'm sure most of us would pick to be with Tyreese or Michonne WAY before we'd pick Glenn, Dale, Axel, Carol, Lori...ok, maybe I'd pick Carol, but that's besides the point. You get my point, the two proven and battle hardened survivors are black. Whereas the weaklings, the psychos and most of the zombies are white, or grey.

Amen, brother!

2.) This question is a bit more personal. I have written short stories for many years. Since reading WD I have wanted to write my own comics, not zombie stories though. Where would I start off in getting my scripts noticed or accepted? Since I am ok financially I would be doing this for fun. I think that gives me an edge right?

It's an uphill battle no matter what. There's too much to say for me to fit it in here--there are countless essays and stuff written on the subject that can be found on the internet pretty easily.

3.) Have you seen the trailer for the new Day of the Dead? You Tube it if you haven't it's interesting, though typically Hollywoodish.

I'm still holding out hope that it could be cool. I wish Ving was playing the same character from Dawn though.

Thanks for reading this. I hope it is published and I can have some small part in the great WD.

Manny Lerma

It's published--welcome to the smallest possible part of history available.

Yo Robert,

Just got issue №33..... I have a few words for you...

This has to be the most sick, twisted, gross, nasty, warped, cruel piece of work you have ever done.

Keep up the good work...

Rod Paddock

Glad you liked it.

Robert,

Did you change the book's title from "The Walking Dead" to "Snuff Films Monthly" and not tell anyone?

Yes I did--Image fucked up the logo.

In my opinion, you crossed the line in terms of gratuitous violence with issue №33 - and that's saying a lot for a zombie book! It's too much - severing arms, pulling out eyeballs, graphic torturing! Suddenly we entered the realm of pornographic violence. You know what I'm talking about, where you're just dishing out the blood and mayhem to the delight and quasi-sexual gratification of the sicko groundlings - "Oh, look at those quivering entrails! See the spraying blood? That gets me hot!!" It's pandering, Kirkman and it's the lowest level of creativity that a writer can aspire too.

What can I say--we all have our off months. I think the issue is an important part of the tapestry of this book--but what do I know?

Wouldn't it have been more effective to have Michonne walk into the governor's room and close the door behind her - then leave it to the reader's imagination about what her wrath drove her to do? No, you have to descend to the depths that every moronic horror film director in this generation falls to - "I have to show everything and leave nothing to the imagination!" What we're talking about here is a real dearth of imagination and an excess of blood-thirstiness - that's not a good thing, Robert. The love of excessive violence cannot be healthy, psychologically speaking, yet the media insists on drenching us in an overabundance of bile, blood and body parts and then everyone wants to know why things like Columbine happen. Yes, we all have personal responsibility in terms of our behavior, but what about YOUR responsibility? Would you really want some dumb ass emulating the torture scene you portrayed in this

issue? If one is trained up in a society where savagery is presented as a justifiable solution to one's problems, some idiot WILL invariably choose it and then we all have to live with the repercussions.

It was always my plan to NOT show what happened to Michonne--to show the "closed door" as you suggest. But then when it came time for HER revenge--I wanted to show every single action taken against the Governor (aside from a few done while he was passed out).

The idea is that you never SEE the evil person's actions... but when the good person does their thing--you see just how evil they can be. It makes you question the character--and hopefully yourself--especially if you're cheering them on the whole way.

There was SOME thought that went into the whole thing.

After a while, you can't get images such as these out of your brain pan. Is this what you see when you close your eyes? Must be hard to sleep at night. Thanks for contributing to my insomnia.

Sissy.

At least when you had Michonne getting raped you didn't show it in detail, I suppose we should be grateful for that!

You know, I can put up with a certain amount of blood, IF it drives a story, but you were pandering and you know it. I'm done with the book. I've been with you from the beginning, but I can't in good conscience continue if you're going to assault me with this level of unjustifiable savagery. Too bad. I enjoyed the character development a great deal. It was a pleasure picking up the book every month.

I'm sorry that you made the decisions you did.

Brian Schiavo

Well, I was totally regretting that "sissy" remark until now! Again, it's absurd to me that one issue makes you change your opinion of what the book is. Won't you feel kinda silly if this is the ONLY issue like this out of a 300 issue run and all the other ones are issues you'd like.

Foolish, man...

And that brings our fine letters column to a close! I'll see you all back here in a few short weeks for issue 37.

VIVA LA ON TIME COMICS!

-Robert Kirkman

You know what bothers me about the Governor? It's the fact that he's really more a mayor, as he is only in charge of this one city, not an entire state. It seems he may not even know all that much about this area, since he doesn't know that there is a huge prison so close to his own city....But he is one of the best written villains in all of comics- Thanks for that. For writing such a great book every month. I just read No.33, and I was surprised to see that the "Governor" survived. That is a bold and great decision, as much as I'm sure everyone expected to see him disposed of for what he did to the group, the thought of him returning one day makes me anxious to find out what else you have planned for him. I heard that Ant-Man is going to be an ongoing, that's great, I love it! I bet people ask you a lot, but do you have anything in the works for Marvel Zombies?

Yeah.

Marvel Zombies Vs. Army of Darkness is a five issue thing I'm NOT writing but I'm consulting on that will be out very soon (probably around the same time as this issue).

Then Marvel Zombies: Dark Days is a prequel one-shot that will be out in MAY that is by the original team of Me, Sean Phillips, June Chung and Arthur Suydam on covers.

Also in May, Black Panther and the new Fantastic Four travel to the zombie-verse in the regular Black Panther monthly series.

Then, in October or so, Me and the gang are back for Marvel Zombies 2--which is going to y'know--blow doors off!

I would love to read more of that, it would be a guaranteed big seller, and I would hate to see anyone but you writing it. One question, are there super heroes in the walking dead universe? Or would that a separate title called Image Zombies?

Thank you for all your effort on all your books,

Daniel Reeves

There are no superheroes in THE WALKING DEAD universe. This book is kinda running along as if this was happening in the real world.



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, Letter Hacks! We're back for another story arc and another round of new mail! Amanda here, hoping you're all hanging in there. Stuff really begins to simmer over the next six issues, so settle in and get ready. Taking over on variant covers for this arc is the wonderful Stephen Platt & Dave McCaig with an awesome connecting set on #37-42 – a feast for the eyes! Okay, enough food metaphors from me... I'm writing this before lunch...

So much great stuff happening with this series! It's so exciting. Stephen PLATT can you believe it?! Man, I can't. Anyway... let's dive into this mail and see what you people are saying.

Hi Mr. Kirkman:

I just read TWD-The Alien by Vaughn & Martin! I found this by accident online and couldn't wait to read it! What a pleasant surprise! This is Claudia's first and last appearance and her status is Unknown.

Claudia is the deuteragonist of TWD: The Alien. She is a survivor encountered by Jeffrey Grimes in Barcelona, Spain.

During an online panel Comic-Con it was reported you jokingly commented upon Claudia's fate: "Claudia was eaten by a whale shortly after the end of that issue, and that's canon." I had to look up the meaning of canon. Things considered "canon" are basically considered "true" (in the story).

In The Walking Dead Saint's and Sinners, Jeffrey's same panda backpack can be found, implying Claudia was successful in making it to the states, although what became of her after she got there is still unknown. It is possible this is just an Easter Egg, however. I had to look up the meaning of "Easter Egg". An Easter Egg in software is a secret message, joke or screen buried in an application.

Oh boy, Richard – welcome to fandom's two biggest words. I hope you get out now, while you still can.

I did some research on killer whales and a question was asked:
Do killer whales really eat humans?

From our historical understanding of killer whales and the recorded experiences people have shared with these marine mammals, we can safely assume that killer whales do not eat people. In fact, there have been no known cases of killer whales eating a human to our knowledge. In many cases, killer whales aren't considered a threat to most people.

The ending to TWD - The Alien does leave us fans wondering what happened next?

Richard Moore

Well, Richard. I think it's kind of clear at this point that Claudia, along with Jeffrey's backpack were eaten by a whale, and that whale was caught in the Gulf of Mexico and brought to New Orleans where it was eaten by a mass of people. The backpack was then pulled from the carcass and that's how it was visible in the game. Now you know!

I have grown up as a huge Zombie fan for as long as I can remember, even when it was not cool to be a fan of zombies. I waited my entire life for more zombie movies to come out, and when I saw that a tv series called The Walking Dead was coming out I couldn't wait. I read and watched everything I could about it, and you did not let me down. It is exactly what I have always wanted. When I found out that it was based on comic books, I was so mad that I never even knew that they existed and that I missed out on them. So, when I read that you were all releasing them again, I searched all over to find where I could buy each and everyone that will be released, and I have. At age of 45 now, I still can't wait to receive my next copy and enjoy it as if it was the first time they were released. Thank You for such an amazing journey you have put us on, and continue to keep the Zombie world..Alive.

Thank You, Keep up the Great Work!!!

Andy A Anderson
Vernal, UT

Welcome to the party, pal!

Mr. Kirkman and team,

Me again. I read your old comments in the letter column of issue 34 and I just have to say, "Hey --- you're on time, great!" You're going on 35 issues without a single delay. Even with paper shortages, supply chain issues, and everything else going on in the world. I'd call that quite an achievement. Even if you couldn't make it happen back in the day.

Very Respectfully
Matthew H.

No excuses this time! I'd be concerned for myself if we were behind...

Hey Guys!

Wow! Firstly, I'd like to thank you for bringing me into the world of Comics! I've always known walking dead originated in comic form when watching the TV series from the start but had no plans really to get stuck in to the comic series. Recently I was in a comic shop looking for Pokémon cards. I saw the Deluxe issue №33 Cover A on the shelf and had a flick through. Even then, although impressed I placed it back on the shelf thinking "if there's one thing I know about this comic it's that there's a fair amount of issues to collect" I have an addictive personality and my Vintage Pokemon collection has already broken the bank. I didn't even know about deluxe being a reprint in color at this point.

I went home and did some research.. guess what? 2 days later I had 50 copies on route to my address and now exactly 1 week later and having now read 8 issues I have 80 copies inside a walking dead short box and everything. You would have guessed by the numbers here that I want every variant and so desperately needed to catch up to the current issue №35. Damn I love the organisation of collecting, got my bag n board technique down n everything. A week ago I didn't give comics a second thought.

Can't tell you how excited I am to start collecting every variant bi-monthly.

That's awesome! The variant covers so far have just been knockouts. We have some GREAT ones in store for you coming up, too!

Finally my second point, I'm a Tattoo Artist over here in the UK and this book has inspired me so much that I may even give comic art a go at some point. I have to say the Tedesco covers are my favourite (being a realism artist myself) I used to worry my mum when I was 8, coming home from my Dads at weekends drawing decapitated zombies after watching various classic horror movies with my dad. That's my earliest memory of drawing.

Also can I just say, having a comic in my collection with my own letter inside it may make me shit. Do you want that on your conscience?

Gary Mossman

Sorry, Gary.

Yeah, can't resist there, Gary. Sorry.

Mr. Kirkman,

I have collected single issues of The Walking Dead since issue №36. I have been collecting TWD Deluxe since issue one and enjoying it thoroughly. It is genuinely worth the cover price and more for all of the added content.

[Side note: you have insisted that you will never collect TWDD in trade paperback form, so I have been collecting multiple copies as an investment (full disclosure here); however, as I have read through the old letter hacks and seen other things that you have insisted would or wouldn't happen, I am losing confidence that my investment will bear fruit. That is not a criticism, merely an observation. Nevertheless, you are welcome for my being a small part of helping TWDD to get to its final issue ;).]

I don't plan on collecting this series any time soon. But I never said never! There are no plans to collect this book, possibly until after it's full run is published (was it eight years for this full series to run its course? I don't remember.) So no trades for nearly a

DECADE... but I'm sure these spectacularly colored issues will be collected some day in the far future.

Since I have read the whole series already, and since I have many other series I am trying to keep up with, I have relished the freedom to dip in and out of TWDD at will. As a result, I have just learned that every several issues you are printing *modern* letters about TWDD, so I hope this makes it in time to get printed in one of the upcoming issues.

Good news!

I had originally planned a much different letter than this, but since reading the original letter hacks from issue №32, I feel compelled to write about something else.

Oh, no...

I am well aware about the controversy around Michonne's rape by the governor, and this is not, as you may surmise, a criticism of that decision. I have critically reviewed the circumstances around the incident multiple times and have come to the conclusion that there is little else you could have done from a narrative perspective, other than keeping Michonne from being part of the investigation party at all, to avoid her fate. Given the personalities of *all* the characters involved, it is almost a foregone conclusion. I am not happy about this fact, but feel that I must acknowledge it.

THAT being said, there is an exchange with a Mr. Abubakari in issue №33's letter hacks that made me feel very uncomfortable. Your response to his very reasonable inquiries about White violence against Black women in fiction penned by White men had very much an "all lives matter" vibe to them, which was completely understandable for the climate in which it was written (and which I myself would have understood and agreed with at the time) but which has not aged well, in my humble opinion.

The question that I have taken a VERY long time to get to is this: if you were to respond to Mr. Abubakari *today*, do you feel that it would be any different? And if so, how? I understand that this may seem like a loaded question, but I hope my previous record of letters written to more than one of your esteemed publications

in a spirit of genuine inquiry will confirm that my intent is not to set you up, but to wonder at the ways in which your perspective may (or may not) have changed relative to the changing times.

As always, I am a huge fan of your work and your thoughtful approach to human relationships in your work, so I eagerly hope you will consider this humble letter worthy of a response.

Ever so sincerely,
Jason M. Poole

Rochester, NY

Well, Jason... I can certainly say I would have responded differently if I'd responded to Mr. Abubakari today. I would have been far more sensitive and understanding in my response as I'm older now and a little better at recognizing my privilege and being empathetic to other perspectives. I still stand by what I wrote, though, and don't regret the subject matter in those issues.

That's our new mail for now but keep your letters coming! We'll be back in just another six issues time. And in keeping with traditions, we've got old Hacks below, this time a one-off early interview with Robert. See you then!

-Amanda LaFranco

See you all back here in a couple short weeks!!

-Robert Kirkman

Welcome to issue 37--I hope you enjoyed it. We're going to be taking a short break from answering mail this issue to run an interview I recently did with Andrea Voiglino for "Alias/Il manifesto". This is going to be translated up for the Italian press, but I figured I'd run it here for all you English speakers to take a gander at.

Enjoy!

1) You are considered one of America's "enfant prodige" comic writers. Tell us something about your first steps into the comic field.

My first step was getting a job at a comic shop during my senior year of high school. I

worked at Red Rock Collectables in Lexington, Kentucky for two years. That was the first thing I did. While there, I learned how Diamond, the comic book distributor here in the United States, got books to the store, and how that worked out, how that generated a profit, I really paid attention to how everything from a retailer point of view worked out.

The comics biz is really simple. It's creator to publisher to distributor to retailer to reader. It's pretty easy to make those five steps happen on a SMALL scale. So I eventually became a publisher. I started Funk-O-Tron, my publishing company when I was twenty, about a year after I quit working at the comic shop and two years after graduating high school.

I published comics for two years. At first as a side job and later, I quit my day job at a lighting warehouse and started publishing full time. I published BATTLE POPE, which I wrote (and later republished in color at Image Comics) and a few other books I didn't work on.

Eventually, BATTLE POPE got me noticed at Image Comics. That allowed me to start writing more, because I didn't have to worry about publishing the work. I did a SuperPatriot mini-series for Erik Larsen and that led to me doing TECH JACKET, INVINCIBLE, CAPES, BRIT, THE WALKING DEAD, CLOUDBALL and REAPER at Image.

After working at Image for about a year or so some people at Marvel started to notice the work I was doing on INVINCIBLE at Image. Then THE WALKING DEAD was a big success and Marvel started offering me work. I started on an ill-fated Sleepwalker series for their Marvel Epic imprint but that was cancelled before it came out and only the first issue was released (I wrote three issues). Then I was offered a Jubilee series, which I did, and a short run on Captain America. After that Marvel offered me an exclusive contract, but allowed me to continue working on INVINCIBLE and THE WALKING DEAD.

That more or less brings us up to date.

2) From EC's "Shock Suspense Stories" to Marvel's "Tales Of The Zombie", from Dracula to Constantine, the American comic book scene has proven to be a real gold mine for the fans of the undead. Who are your favourite scare comics authors of the past? Let's talk a bit about the ones who've mostly influenced your vision.

I hate to admit it but I haven't read a whole heck of a lot of horror comics. I've read an odd issue or two of EC's old Tales from the Crypt series but I couldn't even begin to guess the creative team on that. I started reading comics in 1990 when I was 11 or 12 years old. By that time there weren't a lot of horror comics running and really, I got most of my comics at Wal-Mart for the first few years I collected so it was mostly Marvel comics and a few DC comics... that was all I had to choose from. The closest thing to horror comics I probably read was the first Batman/ Predator crossover drawn by Andy Kubert... or really, I guess Hellboy would count.

I draw most of my horror inspiration from movies, more or less. Zombie movies, vampire movies, monster movies, whatever. I've always been a big fan of George Romero, Wes Craven, John Carpenter, Clive Barker, Peter Jackson and the pile of others I'm more than likely forgetting.

3) Rick Grimes' saga had a great impact notwithstanding the success of the asian horror phenomenon and today's lavish computer-inked books. Did you expect such a success for something so gritty and down-to-earth? How do you explain it?

Lord no, I didn't expect THE WALKING DEAD to be anything close to the success it has become. At first I wasn't even sure it would last 12 issues. I mean, you can't exactly admit to that while you're trying to promote a book. It was certainly ballsy on my part to promote this comic as "the zombie movie that never ends" when I wasn't sure it'd last more than a year--but y'know you do what you gotta do.

I didn't know how the market would react to the book--but more than anything, I just hadn't had a good track record up to that point. BATTLE POPE never sold well, TECH JACKET had been cancelled at issue six, INVINCIBLE was struggling to hang on due to low orders on that book at the time and I had no reason to think THE WALKING DEAD would be any different.

I certainly wanted to write the book forever but what I want and what happens are rarely completely in-line with each other.

And yet--the book came out and was a near instant success. By the time issue 2 was in stores I had a pretty good feeling that the book was catching on. Sell though at the stores was doing really well and our orders had already started to shoot up, so things were looking good.

But even then--I didn't know we'd reach the level we're at now. Our sales on single issues are now at more than triple what our first issue sold and our sales continue to creep up at least a little bit every month. I've got a lot to be thankful for--that's for sure. I try to repay fans who support the book by delivering the best possible stories I can every month and by promising to stick with the book for as long as possible. I don't want to be one of those creators that has a hit and moves on, leaving someone else to handle things. I'd be happy writing this book twenty years from now.

I love working on this book.

4) In the first "Walking Dead" TP intro, you hinted that you're gonna chronicle Rick Grimes adventures for the whole of his life. How can you possibly do that? Did you have a masterplan from the very beginning or you're developing things "on the go"?

Well, keep in mind, Rick could die at any time--so that would chronicle his adventures for the whole of his life right there. I seriously doubt Rick is going to live to be 80, and at the pace this comic usually runs at that would take about 300 years to reach. We're at issue 37 now and not even nine months have passed. Rick could only have two years to live and that could take another 100 issues to show.

Also, I don't think I ever said the book would end if Rick died. It could easily continue after his death.

As far as a master plan goes--I don't have one. When I started, I had mapped the book up to about where I am now, actually. I've, of course, changed some things here and there--and I've added stuff, and along the way I've come up with dozens of other things to do with the book that will keep it going and keep it interesting for years to come. I'm constantly thinking of new and horrible things that will happen to these characters. I love them so much, but I love doing terrible things to them.

So yeah, I do pretty much write things on the go from issue to issue, but I follow a larger plot I've got mapped out for some time. I like to play things fast and loose, though. That's how life is--we never know what's going to come next. So while I do have a road map--if a side road pops up on the horizon at the last minute, I don't hesitate to go that route knowing that I can eventually get back on the main road at a later date.

I keep things interesting for me and hopefully the readers as well.

5) How much of yourself do you put in the character of Rick? How much of your personal experiences get on the pages of the books?

Well, at least a little bit. A lot of things in the book are based on how I think I might react in the situations the characters are put in. But really, half the fun of writing the book is making the characters do things I would never do--it keeps things interesting for me.

Now, Rick and his family are from Cynthiana, Kentucky that's where the first issue takes place. He wakes up in Harrison Memorial Hospital. I'm from Cynthiana, that's where I grew up--I got stitches in Harrison Memorial Hospital. The first artist on the book, Tony Moore is from there, too. So the way the places are drawn is more or less accurate as well. There are little changes here and there because I wanted certain things to happen but for the most part it's accurate. So that's a little bit of me in the book.

Ultimately, this book is about a group of very different people struggling to live and survive together. I try to make these people as different and unique as possible... so at the end of the day there's not much of me in these characters. I worked at a pizza place like Glenn and I was massively in debt at one point like Allen and I'd love to ride around in an RV with two young girls in my later years like Dale, but honestly... that's pretty much it.

I still have both of my hands.

6) What's the big difference in working with different artists like Tony Moore and Charlie Adlard? Are there plans to get other artists on board? Who's your "dream artist" for TWD?

My dream artist is Charlie Adlard, really. Tony drew the first six issues and the first 24 covers. Tony is an amazing artist who I've known since the 7th grade and have worked with on numerous projects. Tony brought a lot to the table for the first volume of this series and I don't think anyone can deny that he's a fantastic artist. The problem was he couldn't keep on schedule with the book, it took him almost a year to do the first six issues and the schedule was starting to catch up to us. Tony was getting other offers on other books with looser deadlines and so it was decided

that he would move on and just do covers. When it came time to replace Tony I looked at a few artists before I settled on Charlie simply because I didn't think Charlie would do it.

Just to be sure, I offered him the gig and was shocked when he accepted. I had published Charlie's work in an anthology I put out back in the Funk-O-Tron days but never in a million years did I think he'd be willing to hop on *THE WALKING DEAD*. By this point the book was a clear success, and I was able to offer him a guaranteed page rate just based on what our sales were at the time--but I had no idea the book would continue to climb in sales and become the hit it is today--and neither did Charlie. I'd always been a huge fan of Charlie's work. I first encountered his work on Larry Young's *Astronauts in Trouble* but Charlie has been around for YEARS (seriously, he's very old. Heh.). He's done work on nearly every major character at Marvel and DC from Batman to Spider-Man to Green Lantern to, well... you get the idea. I was jumping for joy when he signed on to start the book with issue 7.

And he's so professional and reliable he finished issue 7 right away and dove into issue 8 and got us back on schedule right away.

Charlie's art is much more gritty and dark than Tony's. I think it's a much better fit for what I wanted to do and where I wanted to go with the book. It also worked out that the book got much darker and violent as Charlie came on so it really worked well with the tone. Charlie really hit his stride early on with the book and has only gotten better and better with every issue.

So Charlie is it for me. If he ever decides to move on--I'll worry about another artist then, but for now--I'd be happy to have Charlie finish out the book with me... in a few decades or so (he's not THAT old).

7) "The Walking Dead" seems to take direct inspiration from the narrative clichés of all George A. Romero's flicks. Why skipping other interesting character driven zombie Movies like "The Evil Dead", "Re-Animator" or "The Serpent and the Rainbow?" Why did you choose to stick to the "man-eating zombies" thing?

Well, I think most zombie movies follow Romero's "rules" at least partially. There are variations in the speed of the zombies and other minor things but for the most part things pretty much run in-line with what

George Romero set up aside from a few exceptions. So, I kinda thought I'd do my part in cementing the "rules" in other works about Zombies. Vampires and Werewolves have these set rules that are used to varying degrees in all works of fiction featuring them... but zombies are sometimes used in vastly different ways. So I just wanted to be another person out there following the "rules" as I think they should be.

Also, these types of zombies lend themselves better to a long-term survival story that spans a number of years. I couldn't very well go the mad-scientist or the haunted cabin route and keep things interesting for years.

8) More on that. Unlike Romero, who gave his movies a strong political and satirical subtext, you seem to have put all your effort in character development and continuity. This seems quite funny, considering your "Battle Pope" stint and the frequent post-September Eleven references of today's so many mainstream comics.

I like to keep things as timeless as possible. I'd hate for the issues of today to date the work. I think I've kept things fairly universal in the book. I mean, once we all have cell phones implanted in our heads it'll be hard to argue this didn't take place in the past but for now at least I don't think there's anything that dates to work too terribly much.

9) Let alone the references to all survival horror's classics, seems to me that "The Walking Dead" is very akin to "grown-ups" comics like "Kings in Disguise", "Strangers in Paradise", "Blankets", etc. Which is quite surprising, if you think about the average "Wham-Bam" approach of Image Comics. After all these are the same guys of "Spawn" and "Savage Dragon"...

Ah, but you do Image a disservice by judging them by one book. They are also the company of *Leave it to Chance*, *A Touch of Silver*, *Age of Bronze*, *Ministry of Space*, *Fell*, *Hawaiian Dick* and countless other cerebral non-superhero books. Image is a company that can publish the wham-bam action of *Savage Dragon* and *INVINCIBLE* right next to the artiness of something like *Kabuki* or humor books like *Liberty Meadows* or *PVP*. Image is a truly unique and fantastic comic book publisher and I think *THE WALKING DEAD* is just another quality book that fits in well with their overall line-up.

But yeah, the book is about the characters. I

want people to care about the characters and want to see what happens to them next—above all else, this is what's most important with the book. Right now the American comics market is in the middle (or near the end) of a horror comics boom, or more specifically a zombie comics boom. They're everywhere. I don't think there's a publisher in comics that hasn't done at least one zombie book in the last five years. And that's going to bust eventually, soon, I think. Pretty soon people are going to be sick of zombie books. And if this book was solely about "zombies" and had little else to offer—the book might be hurt by that bust—and honestly it could still be hurt. But hopefully people will see there's much more to this book than simple zombie action and gore.

To be honest—I wouldn't have any fun writing this book if it was just zombie nonsense all the time. I'm much more interested in chronicling the lives of these characters than simply figuring out ways for them to die gruesome deaths.

10) Although zombies have developed a loyal following during their ventures on the silver screen, comicwise they've never experienced a success like the one they had with "The Walking Dead" or "Marvel Zombies". How do you explain that?

I'm totally awesome? All joking aside—I have no clue. Marvel Zombies, I think, is a success because it's something Marvel has NEVER done before. It's something that's just shocking to see Marvel allow to be published. I did things in that book I thought I was going to be fired over—but they were fine with it. And I've got to think that at least contributed to its success.

With THE WALKING DEAD—I don't really know. I think it has very little in common with other Zombie comics in that we focus on the characters so much. I'd like to stick with the book to the point that there aren't many zombies left in the book. I'd love to be able to write this comic for twenty years or more—to the point where the characters (that are left) are building houses and only see a zombie once every few months—and the book is more about reestablishing civilization than it is about continually protecting themselves.

Most other zombie comics are just short-term cash grabs, really. Just do a one-shot of five or six issues and move on. And when you do that—you really don't have the room to do anything that hasn't been done better in countless movies. Now there are, of course,

exceptions to that—like Remains by Steve Niles and Kieron Dwyer, which I thought was great. But for the most part, I don't think other zombie books offer up anything new.

At the very least—THE WALKING DEAD offers the promise of the continued adventure... sticking with the same characters for years reaching past what any zombie movie has been able to show thus far.

At the end of the day, though—I have no clue why it sells so well. Maybe my mom is buying all the copies.

11) In the last few years you've been working alongside majors like Image and Marvel nonchalantly shifting from comedy to horror, from super-heroes to "What if". In which context do you feel most at ease, and why?

I find it all equally difficult. Some days I'm in the mood to write THE WALKING DEAD but Ultimate X-Men is due and so it's kinda hard to kick into super-hero gear but for the most part I'm able to avoid that. I like doing different types of things all the time—it keeps things fresh and keeps me from having ideas that are interchangeable between whatever I'm working on.

I'm never sitting around deciding if I should do something in THE WALKING DEAD or save it for INVINCIBLE. Everything I work on is so different from each other it's easy to keep things separate and bounce from book to book.

So some days it's easier to do a light-hearted superhero book and some days it's easier to do a dark superhero book or a survival horror book, it really just depends on what kind of mood I'm in and luckily, I've got enough differing work to be able to work on something no matter what mood I'm in.

And that'll do it for this month. I promise to resume regular mail-answering duties next month. See you then!

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello lovely, readers! Amanda here, and back again for a classic edition of Letter Hacks. The title for this story arc eventually became "The Calm Before," and this issue gives us a nice glimpse into why. There's something charged in the air, and I don't think it's just the charred embers of the National Guard Station. Time will tell if that was worth the fireworks and the detour... While we wait to find out, enjoy these old letters from the summer of '07.

I'm sure there's a ton of things I should probably be telling you about but there's a bunch of mail to answer since I ran that interview last issue instead of a letters column... so I gotta get caught up.

So let's dive in shall we?

Dear Mister Kirkman,

In issue 35, why is it the Asian guy who drives a car into a wall? Couldn't you have made the driver a white person? Why do you have to perpetuate the Asians-drive-badly stereotype?! Being a proud half-Asian, I'm somewhat offended. At LEAST half offended; to be sure!

For cryin' out loud, the Hispanic guy turns out to be a liar and a traitor? I can't BELIEVE you! Why couldn't he be a just, kind-hearted and honest friend? Your choices are getting worse and worse... And not only is the strong black female character, Michonne, raped and tortured-- but she's also a schizophrenic?! You add even further insult upon injury, it's no wonder all these SINCERE and INTELLIGENT readers are dropping your book like a ruptured colostomy bag!

Also, why do you have so many white characters going through hell on earth, issue after issue? Do you hate white people, too? And those poor, poor zombies... EVERY issue, these helpless, hopeless

beings are RE-KILLED left and right! Like the first time wasn't BAD enough! It's' as if THEY DIDN'T MATTER TO YOU. Your offensiveness KNOWS NO BOUNDS, sir! Have you no cultural understanding or sympathy?

I implore you, please, stop this madness. For the sake of the few readers you have left.

Drew G.
Berkeley, CA

PS -- Last issue was great writing, like every other issue before it. Keep up the good work, man.

Excellent letter, young Drew.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you Drew Gill, production artist at Image comics. Take a bow, Drew. Way to take something very not funny and make it very funny.

It's good to know I have at least one reader left.

Well, kids it looks like that'll do it for this issue's installment of "Letter Hacks." I really appreciate you buying this issue and I hope-- what? There's more?

Damn.

ARGHHH!!!! I can't stand the suspense this comic is so good!!! Who's worried about zombies, it's your cliffhangers that are killing me!

I can't believe you: You left the Governor alive, overran the prison with zombies, didn't explain the helicopter, and set Woodsbury only a few miles from the Prison? I love it! I hate waiting! What's gonna happen? 30 days is forever!!! (good job on the regular schedule!)

Well, we slipped again this ish--but seriously, this is the last time. Also, I DID explain the helicopter. The Governor mentioned where it

was from in issue 28, I believe. They all kinda run together for me.

Here is what I want to have happen. I want ever escalating tribal battles! Rick's Tribe vrs the Govenor's! I want to see Woodburry overrun by zombies when the Govenor tries to take the prison. I want a long drawn out 3 way battle: Prison vs Woodburry vs Zombies. Then I want Rick to emerge as the leader of all the survivors. Then! I want Rick's Tribe to find/join a HUGE tribe. They work to clear the land of zombies, and succeed, things look good, then a giant swarm of migrating zombies sweeps in, hundreds die and it is utter terror!

Basically, I'm addicted to your writing and need you to take it up a notch so I can get the same high again. I've had to start buying Invincible & Antman. I just can't stand it. Could you get Bendis to let your write Ultimate Spiderman?

He's too senile to know when it's time to move on. I'm working on it, though.

Here's to sales doubling by issue 50!
Mahdroo McCaleb

We can only hope...

Dear Mr. Kirkman and the Gang.

Holy \$%No@!!!

In my 29 years of life. I don't think anything printed has shocked me the way WD 34 did. After the intensity of the last issue, I kinda expected you to give us readers a chance to catch our breaths. But nope, you just couldn't.....You relentless bastard!!!! Thank You!!!

The 2 page spread of the prison filled with zombies....had me scooping my own brains off the floor....because my head was totally blown!!!!

Just a few statements

1. Thank You

2. Quality all ways exceeds quantity.....even if it was 4 or 5 issues in one year.....it would still be my favorite title. This is one really special book. I'd wait years for a new issue if I had to.

Thankfully you won't have to. We want to put the book out as much as possible too.

3. Have you tried out the audiobook for World War Z? It has a few great voices like Mark Hamill, Alan Alda, Henry Rollins and so forth. Worth checking out. And it's pretty cheap on iTunes.

I hear it cuts stuff from the book for length. I'd rather just read the book if I can find time.

Anyways.....awesome issue guys. Thanks for you time.

Duane Hand

Keep reading and we'll keep promising to ship issues on time only to slip a bit in the schedule time after time. EXCELSIOR!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

The Walking Dead is awesome! God, you're so good at pulling people in and never letting go!!

Anyways, what kind of collection of comics do you own, personally? And also, do you follow any current series?

A big one. I have, well, about 20 long boxes of comics at this point, maybe more. I work in my basement, half of it is a studio and the other half is a comic book storage center. I have every comic book I've ever bought. Except for Sword of Azrael #1. I sold that when it was worth a bit of money so that I could buy the first Savage Dragon TPB. It had all kinds of new pages in it that I just had to have.

Right now I read Noble Causes, Dynamo 5, Godland, Savage Dragon (if it ever comes out), Astro City, Ex Machina, Y The Last Man, Astonishing X-Men, Ultimate Spider-Man, Ultimates, Daredevil, Criminal, PVP, Fell, Casanova, Jack Staff, She Hulk, Powers, New Avengers, Mighty Avengers, Captain America, 100 Bullets, All-Star Batman and Robin, All-Star Superman, I'd read anything written, drawn or both by Walt Simonson, Geof Darrow, Bryan Lee O'Malley, Bob Fingerman, David Finch, Dale Keown, Olivier Coipel, Mike Wieringo, Cory Walker, Craig Thompson, Leinil Francis Yu, and any number of people who I can't seem to recall right now. I'm doing this off the top of my head. There's a ton of other stuff I'm sure I

read that I'm forgetting. I get a lot of TPBs as well... and there's a lot of reading I do just to bone up on Marvel stuff for reference purposes.

Okay, one final question. What kind of music gets you pumped up to write TWD?

Awesomely sincere,
Will C.

Not really. I listen to music while I write but nothing specifically to get me into the mood for writing TWD. If I did it'd be Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds or The Dirty Three. That stuff gets me all mellow and relaxed and it's got a darker edge to it. But I usually just sit down and write, mostly while listening to The Presidents Of The United States Of America (best band since the Beatles--am I right?).

Whoa!! That book was awesome! I hope that was the last we'll see of the Mayor.. in 'Live form' anyway. -But there's one thing that bugs me, if everyone is already infected and you die from zombie bites. right? Michonne bites the mayor when they're wrestling or whatever and so im just wondering wheather he'd die from it and turn cannibal dead too.

No, a zombie bite kills you because it's a rotting, germ filled corpse breaking the skin and sending all kinds of nasty junk right into your blood stream. It gets you infected with all kinds of stuff and you die from the resulting illness. Then, because everyone is "infected" with whatever the zombie plague is... once you die, you come back as a zombie. A bite from a human wouldn't kill you any more than a bite usually would.

Heh. it'd be ironic if he was put in that fighting ring. Also, the last couple of issues had me really excited i even almost cried at the end of issue 34! I'm sure the others will be alright, right? RIGHT!? i hope Axel isn't dead. hehe. Also, im sure they can take the Prison back from the Axis Zombies. I've been jumping up and down laughing and smiling and going crazy over the story. It's awesome, though my mum thinks I've gone nuts.

I've also got a couple of questions;

1. Will you show us whatever happened in the prison? Like a flashback, it could be lame, we wouldn't want a GN version of Lost now. Oo Maybe even a totally different

book, maybe you've already got it sorted and i'm just wasting your time.

There's really no need to see what happened in the prison. I'm trying to use flashbacks as sparingly as possible.

2. Carol is hot, can you give her, her own girlfriend? Maybe Alice? Whoo!

I'll see what I can do.

3. It'd be cool to see cameo's in TWD, do you think you'd ever put them in? eg, in my comic book, i bring back the same zombie over and over again, (maybe Michonne recognises a little girl outside the prison -the same one from the mayors room) my friends think its stupid but still funny. I would tell you the title but i dont want to turn this letter into an advertisement! (Also im ametuer comic book writer)

No plans. Although there is ONE zombie who's appeared no less than three different times in the book. Look for him!

4. I notice that in most Zombie books, movies or Graphic Novels they never actually call them Zombies. They call them "monsters" or "things" but never Zombies. Do you know why that is?

Most of those movies don't take place in worlds where zombie movies don't exist. So the term zombie hasn't been appropriated for use the way it has here. The Walking Dead takes place in our world, as if this stuff had started happening in October 2003 and continued from there. Now, in the book it's still only like... June 2004 at this point (if you're keeping track), but these people would at least be aware of the existence of zombie movies. They don't really talk about it much... because that would be silly.

Also, 5. do you think you could get a character to (always) refer to them as Zombies?

There's been a few times... I don't think it's gotten to the point where the term is used exclusively. Maybe in time.

OK, so that's all I can think of right now, a bit lame, but I can't wait to see issue 35! Thanks heaps!

-Isaako

Thanks for reading!

Hey, what gives? I drool and wait for what seems like an eternity, and when issue №35 of TWD comes out...the last page is messed up...

And by messed up, I mean you reprinted the page where Tyreese apologizes to Rick. We love (or hate) the "surprise cliffhanger endings" at the end of each issue...and I was very upset to see that we were denied the "ending" of this issue.

(Especially since Tyreese was hinting that something was up since Martinez was "INSIDE for HOURS)

((By they way...did you see the way he looked at Andrea on Page № 7 ?...maybe that's what he was INSIDE...that would cause some drama))

Anyway, will you send me (us) a properly revised copy of the issue? Or will the last page be included in issue № 36? Or are we, the readers, S.O.L. ???

Inquiring minds want to know....thanks.

J.D.

When issue 35 was first printed, it was messed up, and it was my fault. I downloaded the proofs and didn't look at them right away. Image contacted me the next day to see if I had looked over the proofs and thinking back, I remembered downloading them, and I USUALLY look at the right away, so I figured I must have looked at them, and I didn't REMEMBER there being a problem... so I approved the book. So then, when the book came in and was fucked up (page 21 printed twice instead of 22) I couldn't really do anything. The printer wouldn't reprint if free of charge since it wasn't their fault. So I reprinted the issue on my dime, eating the cost of an entire separate print run.

I'm still kicking myself for doing that.

But we participate in a retailer first look program, where retailers get copies of book a week early so they can show customers and adjust orders if they think they need more copies. I thought it'd be neat to let some of the BAD copies leak out in that program. It's only 1500 copies or something. I figured they'd be collectors items, or a neat variant version for people to hunt down.

But I didn't exactly announce this, so maybe it wasn't the best idea.

Anyway, the vast majority of the print run 25,000 or so are completely fine. So you should have no trouble returning that copy to a retailer and getting a good one. If you do have trouble, email me and I'll see about getting you a replacement copy (and that goes for anyone who accidentally got a messed up copy).

Kirkman,

I am a new convert to TWD. In fact I was not a comic book reader at all until I found out about TWD.

I love how you portray Glenn in the book. He is a well rounded character.

It is a breath of fresh air to see an Asian character portrayed in a non-stereotype role. He is smart, interactive, industrious, and gets the girl.

Kent

It's letters like these that help me fight the urge for Glenn to break out into some karate whenever there's trouble. Thank God for these letters, people.

Kirkman,

Thank you. Truly thank you, and not just for your wonderful book, but because of how you have affected people, myself included, with your stories. Notably the Woodbury arc of TWD has been the cause of some fascinating letters in your book. When I read other books letter pages it's always filled with people writing long winded paragraphs about how mad or upset they are about a costume change, or something equally inane. but your book, has people up in arms and discussing important issues such as rape, racism, and social classism. These issues need to be addressed, and it is sometimes viewed as not polite to discuss these things in daily life, and so the problems and issues never get any serious thought, but you have given people an outlet, and promoted discussion and renewed passion in very real social problems. However unintentional they may be. Thank You. Thank You. Thank You. It's just good to see people really

thinking and discussing things of actual importance.

Ok. now on to some nerd stuff.

1) Where can I get a subscription to the walking dead, so that I can have it show up at my house?

I believe www.mycomicshop.com offers subscription services... but I know there are a bunch out there.

Image Comics itself does not offer a subscription service.

2) What are some monthly books do you read currently?

I already went over this earlier in this very letters column.

3) Can this be published in issue 36? pretty please?

How about 38? Does that work?

Your Reader for life,
-Michael Kotlarek II

I'm going to hold you to that.

Dear Rob,

I don't know why I write you letters. You don't print them anymore.

Heh.

Walking Dead is an interesting character study at least, but--I just wish it was in color you know?! Maybe THEN I'd know who anyone was.

See, I hear this crap all the time. I swear it's not that hard if you just pay attention.

I didn't even really know till this issue's letter column what Rick's last name was: Grimes. I guess it fits, don't it?

Is that a problem? Do you have to know everyone's last name? Rick's was mentioned in issue 1, at least... I know that. I just don't think it's important for people to be running around saying their last names all the time.

For a black and white somewhat independent comic there's not much T & A involved here, huh?

Is that a problem?

I honestly think this book will burn out after not too much longer.

Your opinion is duly noted. I'll do my best to prove you wrong.

And Again I ask you, Kirk: What about God? Why don't Rick and these others pray to God and, and ask him why he let this happen? Don't you believe in God, RK?

Hershel is the only character in the book that is devout. I believe Otis was shown praying, too. Hershel's doing it all the time, whether we show it or not. Personally, I'm an atheist... and I guess that might come through a bit in this book. I'll try to throw some God talk in there. It is an important part of American life that probably could stand to be represented a bit better... it'll just need to occur naturally, keep reading true believer!

I think I only even learned how a Zombie is made this issue too: by biting. Still, it wasn't so bad, though. I didn't have to skim- read it or anything.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Zombies aren't made by biting. What book are you reading?

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I'll be brief. "Walking Dead" is one of the best action/drama series I have ever read. This is coming from someone who has been reading comics for the better part of 40 years. I was wondering if you have ever approached or been approached by any of the Cable T.V. executives about turning TWD into either a live action or animated series on Cable (HBO, ect...)? I believe TWD has the type of drama you would find in a show like "Oz" or "The Sopranos". I think it has the staying power of those shows. Please look into it. Thanks much. Oh! And never stop writing TWD.

Ty Scott Evans

I agree, the book would make an excellent television show, but there's currently no plans on the horizon, sadly. But I promise, as soon as I have news to announce... you'll hear about it.

Mr. Kirkman

Several months ago I wrote in indicating that I was dropping the floppy issues and returning to the TPB editions. This due to the lateness of the monthly issues. By the way, thanks for printing that letter & better yet, explaining the situation.

Well, just as I was about to proceed with that plan, issue №33 came out. With all the buzz around that issue, I managed to get the last copy at my local comic store. Man, you are making it very difficult to proceed with my plan. Issues №33 and №34, were just incredible. I just had to purchase them. Now, issue №35 just came out. And yes, I picked that one up as well. Not as powerful as the two previous issues, but still worth it. I guess I'll just have to drop my plans and continue to pick up the monthly issues.

HA! I WIN! (not that I mind you just buying the TPBs... as long as you're reading really).

As for issue №35, just a few things I would like to point out that seemed rather odd. I found the issue very talky. There was a lot of action going on, but, somehow the visuals seemed to be lost behind the amount of word balloons. Perhaps it was just me, and the way I read it. Second, the clean up. I thought that would have been an entire issue right there. Follow the action as they attempt to secure the Prison again. I felt like the jump ahead was too big.

In my opinion, we'd already shown the clean up the prison twice, in issue 13 and again in issue 19. So I figured it'd be better to skip it.

Also, I believe in issue №34 you mentioned that you would be cutting back on the letter pages. I understand that. That thing must eat away at your time. Better to get those issues out on time than waste it answering letters. Issue №34 presented that short Walking Dead Christmas story which I had never read before. Issue №35 had something not related to Walking Dead to fill up the pages. Is it possible to get extra Walking Dead related material to fill up those pages. Pencilled pages, Character Index, script notes etc. I always loved the idea that the monthly issues were completely related to Walking Dead material.

Thanks, and keep up the great work.
AA

I like previewing other good books that I think people will enjoy. Also, doing a letters column is way faster than putting together any kind of TWD bonus material for the back. Also, there's really not a lot. I write the script and Charlie draws the pages. Every now and then there's a cover sketch by either me or him... but there's not enough for even one page of sketches every issue. It's just not feasible. I am doing longer letters columns from time to time--like this issue.

Dudel

I don't have a good nickname to issue you, but if that was the zombie-you getting run over by Glenn's car in issue 35 then maybe it should be RK for roadkill. Actually on third and fourth glance that reminds me more of Tony Moore. It's only right that you should get a zombie-cameo in your own book. Maybe I should have been paying better attention all along. I'm always on the lookout for celebrity-zombies.

Anyway, I'm the guy that wrote an overly fan-boy letter about 6 months back saying how it was coincidental that whats-her-name was reading Moby Dick in the prison cuz I just happened to be reading Moby Dick... I'd just like to say that 8 months later I've finally finished that book, and it was great. Although, you could take out about half the chapters and it would still be great.

I'll read it one of these days. I'm really not all that well-read. I'm ashamed.

I'm writing now because I believe your book, as a work of art, should not be censored by anyone's sensibilities but those of yourself and Charlie, and that goes for your lettercol too. I enjoy the letters column because it's a true living dialogue between yourself and your audience unlike any other artistic medium. In responding to criticism of Michonne's rape (or portrayal thereof) you said "Am I just digging myself a deeper hole by printing the letters dealing with this stuff? I can't even tell any more." I hear ya, man, but standing up to the harshest criticism for a book you believe in is about the best thing you can do. We're all along for the ride.

I hope it was at least entertaining.

With that, I'd just like to add that your single-issue tempo as well as the tempo of

the arcs has always been dead-on. Shipping tempo, too... I'll wait on quality any day. From the sound of it issue 36 might show up this week or next... cheers to that!

- Brian Hans

p.s. Cliff's back covers make a strong case for clear backing boards!

They certainly do. Cliff is the man!!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I would like to start my letter by saying that you are a bad bad man...and you're sneaky...And you're just a mean fucker. My heart sank. I jumped up and screamed out. I shouted out curses of denial. I shook my fist at the universe and screamed my NO to an uncaring sky. It was at that moment of abject horror that I realized YOU were the source of my dismay and fear and terror...

...and for THAT I would like to thank you.

The ending to issue №34 was the best shocker I've had in awhile. I totally didn't see it coming. By now I've picked up issue №35 and I know how that turns out, but still. I hope this book lasts forever! ...or at least as long as you are willing and interested in writing it. I've been following since issue №7 and have eagerly awaited each new chapter. You've got me by the nose Mr. Kirkman, lead on!

I would also like to note that since you seem to have ignited a zombie craze in comics again (I do credit YOU with that What books were out there before THE WALKING DEAD?!? Hunh?!? Who paved the road Beeyatches?!?) I've picked up a few of the other books that have come out along the way and have been disappointed each time...because they just don't get it.

It is obvious that the work is being done for the buck and nothing more.

Anyway...I just want to thank you for getting it.

Thank You,
Jesse W. Campbell

Well, I guess I can say, you're welcome. But seriously, thanks for reading the book. I really do put a lot into this title and I'm glad you're

digging it. It's good to hear this stuff from time to time. If you want to read good zombie books that I think are on-par with The Walking Dead, check out REMAINS, that's a good one. And I think WASTELAND is really good, I hear a lot of good stuff, I just bought the TPB but haven't been able to read it yet. (I don't believe it actually has zombies in it, though).

And with that we bring another letters column to a close.

I'll see you back here in two weeks (for real this time) for issue 39 and then from here on out we're monthly or better.

PROMISE.

See you soon.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello readers, Amanda here and celebrating the moment Lori finally has this hecking baby! It wouldn't be THE WALKING DEAD without some added tension, but congrats to the Grimes family. For all the past letter writers who'd asked when it was coming, we've finally made it! Below, we're back with some classic Letter Hacks, where Robert talks about not publishing the series in color once again. I should really start keeping a tally. If you have one, write in!

So, holy crap--I can't believe we're already on issue 39. I feel like we're just getting started, too... even though this series has already outlasted a good number of creator-owned series.

I mean, I think about how there are more issues of this series out there than things like HELLBOY and PLANETARY and I'm shocked. I mean, not that I think we're even remotely on-par with those great series, but it seems like those books have been around forever... and they have. It doesn't seem right that we should have more issues out than them.

And yet you jerks still complain about the shipping schedule. (smiley face)

Honestly, I am flattered more than anything by the complaints of our shipping schedule. I take it to mean you guys really dig the books and that means a lot to me.

Hopefully this issue shipped closely behind issue 38 so you'll see that we are getting closer and closer to on-time. Regardless, we do at least come out regularly, if we don't always (or often) hit our ship dates. You gotta at least give us that.

But enough scheduling talk.

Sales numbers are still going up on the series. The book broke into the top 100 comics for the first time last month and the market is much stronger these days than it has been in years past. Meaning, it takes more to crack the top 100 than it did a few years ago. I don't often talk about numbers these days, but I just wanted

to let the people who are committed for the long haul on the series to know that we're still trucking along with no end in sight.

So that's good right?

But enough numbers talk... let's answer some mail.

Dear Mr. Kirkman:

First off, and I know you get this a lot, but yet another zombie-obsessed chick wants to tell you, you're doing a kick-ass job here. WD stands up to repeat readings, my lit-crit pretensions, and years of systematic study in the ways of the zombie. My college is offering a course in graphic novels currently (which, of course, I'm taking), and just so you know, I find your work compelling and quality enough that I'm actually giving my presentation on Marvel Zombies and writing a research paper about the Walking Dead. Because seriously, you rock.

And I know that you didn't do it for approval and that you don't need some stranger cheering you on, but I feel compelled to do it anyway, regarding:

When did I ever state I didn't do this for approval? Carry on.

In issue 32 (yes, I'm behind that much), Sundjata Abubakari wrote in to take you to task for portraying the rape of a black woman by a white man. You clearly stated that you hoped that if the reader was this upset about this rape, that he or she would also be upset about the rapes and bad things that happened to other characters, regardless of race or gender, and that you were looking at it as "what's best for the story". I just want to say: You go, Mr. Kirkman! People gave Alice Walker a lot of shit about writing *The Color Purple*, too (the portrayal of black men as violent; I believe that was the problem), but when I read *The Color Purple*, it literally changed my life, as clichéd as that is. I think that the rape of Michonne

doesn't actually encourage race and gender inequality: by showing it in such harsh, ugly, brutal, disgusting light, you make it thought provoking, not titillating. The intent was very obviously to make us hate the governor, to make us wonder about how a society is formed in the midst of lawless chaos, to make us THINK about how far people are willing to go to feel safe (as in the townspeople), and what kinds of things we want to just not think about, but which we are willing to allow as long as it keeps us in Pringles and Saturday night tv. In fact, that Michonne is a black woman being raped by a white man makes this a stronger indictment of Western history, in that yes, this is exactly one way in which white male capitalist pseudo-Christian hegemony was established. Ok, maybe I'm reading more into it than you intended, but that's what I get out of it. The governor gives the people their bread and circuses, and in return they turn a blind eye to his evil.

And by the way: as a woman who has been sexually abused, I have to say that while the scene was horrifying, disgusting, and upsetting, the fact that Michonne never begs, or cowers, or submits--well, all I can say is, she's an inspiration to me. It makes me wonder what the hell she's been through before to be so strong, but regardless, her strength is amazing, and although this may be a cliché, through vicarious living, her strength gives me strength. I don't see this event as dehumanizing her, or breaking her, even though that was obviously the governor's intent in doing it. Rather, the fact that she retains her dignity, that she is HER OWN PERSON, belonging to no one else no matter what is done to her, only makes her character stronger. And honestly, I think that's what bothers the governor the most about her, he knows that no matter what he does to her, he CAN'T break her. Crack, yes, but shatter? No.

So anyway, I just wanted to thank you for standing up for writer's rights, for portraying what you felt had to be portrayed at the time, for portraying a woman who goes through what most people think is the worst thing that can happen to a female and who comes through on the other side of it more bitter, maybe, but ultimately, unwilling to submit, unwilling to let them shatter her, and unwilling to let what some psycho does to her rule the rest of her existence. Even if she winds up breaking down a little later (which wouldn't surprise me), the fact that she can keep her shit together long enough to survive, and that she can even be humane enough

(even after her experience) to cry over her actions when she takes her vengeance in the infamous issue 33, is what will stick with me.

Sarasvati

Thank you for writing in. You've provided valuable perspective on the topic at hand. I appreciate it.

p.s.--I know this is totally off topic, but also in a letter in issue 32, you said that you usually prefer serious zombie art. However, I've gotten my greedy little paws on "Marvel Zombies" recently and laughed all the way through (esp. at the parodic treatment of Spidey and his 'sensitive nature'; the character based humor is great here--or maybe I just took it all the wrong way.) Was there something that they allowed you to do with zombie humor here that you don't usually see in humorous zombie art? And another question, is this where you put some of the ideas you didn't feel were appropriate for WD, or were the two pretty much unrelated? Does the use of color in Marvel Zombies make it more open to humor than WD, in your opinion?

As a reader, I'd probably rather read THE WALKING DEAD than Marvel Zombies. I just prefer things more serious in zombie fiction. I like Day Of the Dead better than Return of the Living Dead. I like Return a lot--I just prefer Day. As a writer, it was great fun to cut loose and just do whatever came to mind in the zombie situation without having to worry about it being realistic. So while it's not the tone I prefer to read--writing Marvel Zombies was a hoot and a half. Although, I don't think I used anything I wouldn't have done (if I could) in THE WALKING DEAD... it was all made up just for that series.

p.s.s.: zombie honeymoon. GREAT film. If you haven't seen it, you really should. It's heart wrenching, tho.

Hmm. Never even heard of it. I'll have to look it up. Thanks!

Mr. Kirkman:

I know that the subject matter of this email is very tired by now; I don't have too much to say though.

I was more shocked by some of the letters recently than the pages of the comic itself.

I'm not going to read them again in order to quote anything specific. I already wish I had never read them.

Please don't start censoring your material. I absolutely love this book and I don't want to see it get watered down. I know you stated that this wouldn't happen, but the seed was planted in my brain. I need some reassurance or I will start second-guessing the intent of the story. This would ruin it for me.

Please don't start censoring your material.

Thanks for listening.

Andrew.

Yeah, no worries there, Andrew. Anything I do in this book is something I want to do, pure and simple, for the sake of the story or the characters. I don't second guess myself and I won't be changing my story for fear of backlash.

Case in point, the character Martinez. The guy from Woodbury who was murdered by Rick for attempting to report the whereabouts of the prison. He was the first Hispanic character introduced in the book (and won't be the last) and I never really took that into consideration. When I decided Rick would murder him, I realized I might get some backlash for killing my only Hispanic character. I even briefly considered changing the story- -but in the end I stuck to my guns and went with the plan.

As I recall, I've gotten a few complaints but nothing major.

I know Martinez wasn't killed for being Hispanic, and I believe most every sane reader will know that's the case as well, so I'm not planning on making it a habit of playing to the small group of vocal crazy people who read far too much into this work.

Kirkman,

Just a quickie to say that Glenn digging through the bodies for an engagement ring was, somehow, one of the most heart-warming moments I've seen in comics in years. Well done for making what should have been weird and icky, um, not.

-Kelvin Green

Thanks!

Wow. Kirkmonster....

Issue 36 just blew me away. Every time I open up a copy of TWD, it's like the story does write itself. I hope your fertile brain stays fertile for a long time.

Thanks for printing my letter. I'm 54 years old and I think that is actually the first letter I ever had printed in a letters column. Of course, I had to buy copies of issue 36 for all my friends and family so in retrospect it is a clever marketing move on your part, eh?

The only thing I regret is them making me prove it was my letter by showing them the original on my computer. Ha, ha.

Anyway, keep on writing. You are an inspiration. I still think you are channeling the zombie universe even though you may not realize it. That doesn't make you any less of an amazing writer. I aspire to create an online comic some day and I can't imagine doing seven or eight series at a time like you do. It boggles my mind to come up with characters and plot developments for one comic idea.

It ain't easy. You don't know how many times I've written Invincible flying in to save Rick and crew and had to delete multiple pages of a script and start over. It's a pain in the ass. Freedom Ring in Marvel Team-Up? That was originally just Invincible and I had to change it at the last minute.

Like you, I have several characters from comics I drew for myself as a kid. I just wish I would have had the presence of mind and determination to do something with them years ago.

You are an amazing guy. Keep on writing. I hope they come out with some action figures for Invincible and TWD. My wife is already going nuts from the collection I have currently from over the years.

Take care.
Michael

I tell you what, Michael... I'll be sure not to make any toys for INVINCIBLE or THE WALKING DEAD in the near future. I wouldn't want to get your wife angry at you.

Mr. Kirkman,

O.K , first let me give the obvious kudos on a great mag and please keep it going for many years to come!

Now to business and the main reason I'm writing you (first time). I just finished reading issue 36 and I typically enjoy reading your "letter hacks" that write in until recently.

Heh.

I'm perplexed at the level of complete idiocy in our world! The grief that you have received about a "fictitious" character and how they were treated in a comic book is absolutely insane! The whole premise of a zombie apocalypse is extremely violent and gore infused by nature. DUH!!?? Why would these idiots buy a book (which by the way is their own choice) that might offend their sensitive little hearts? Can they be serious? My suggestion to all readers that are offended by this book and it's subject matter? Stick to your old copies of "Little Lulu" and "Archie". This is a big persons comic and isn't for everyone, but I love it. The same way I love when Romero filmed a zombie taking a chunk out of someone's neck. It's horror fantasy! Lighten up, Francis!

I'm with you, pal. Hopefully we've seen the end of those kind of letters for a while.

So, please Kirkman, don't water anything down. In fact, open up the flood gates and let the rivers run red! That is what made your story so cool!

Troy O'Neil

P.S. I heard that you stopped in to my local comic book shop (PACKRAT Comics Hiliard, OH.) Do you work with someone in the area, and if so, maybe a signing at the store some day?

Hm, I believe you've been deceived. Unless I've lost a chunk of my memory I've never set foot into Hiliard, Ohio or the Packrat Comics there. I'm only a state away--but I'm never been there. Sorry.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

This issue was a lot more to my liking. Y' think Martinez will be a zombie now? Or do

you have to get 'bitten' while you're alive? I'd still like for you to have characters call each other by name a Lot more; I've been reading at least a year and, well, I couldn't even tell you Rick's wife's name...is it Sarah? And you must admit, lot of characters to keep track of, and it is black and white. I'm pretty(as in fairly) excited about The Astounding Wolf-Man! I'll probably have read the first issue b4 you can answer this question but, what makes him unique? He can't Just be a werewolf, now can he?

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Shaw

You're a weird dude, Andrew. The Astounding Wolf-Man is plenty unique, you'll see. As for people calling people by name, I think most people are called by name at least once in every issue they appear, but I'm sure that sometimes someone slips by without a mention. The problem is, it's not natural for someone to call someone they know by name frequently. "Hi, Rick, how are you today?" "Fine, Lori, I'm doing great." "Carl, can you go grab some bullets for me." "Sure, Dad will do." "Thanks, Carl." If everyone did that--it's get old really quick. But if you pay attention--I think it's pretty easy to learn everyone's names.

Kirkman,

Hey man, I just wanted to drop you a quick e-mail in support of your Walking Dead title. After reading the letters from the last couple issues I didn't want you to think that most (or very many at least) of the book's readers felt the same way in regards to the book's intensity. Don't change a thing.

You have to ask yourself, if these people have a problem with violence & the dark side of human nature, what are they doing reading a book about the zombie holocaust & the end of human civilization in the first place?

Keep up the good work. I can't wait for the upcoming Marvel Zombie books. Have you given up on the game Urban Dead?

C.

Man, I need to print more negative mail. The positive feedback is amazing. Never played Urban Dead... should I?

Mr Kirkman,

I loved issue 36, but not for the reasons you may think. The murder of Martinez, and yes it was a murder, was shocking. Rick left the prison with one thing in mind, stop Martinez by any means necessary. Those means turned out to be hitting Martinez from behind, a cowardly act, then choking the life out of the defenseless man. Then Rick rationalizes that it was to protect his family and the others at the prison, but his explanation to his wife does not fit the scene that unfolded earlier. Rick was angry with only one thing on his mind. Charge in first and then ask questions. No attempt was made at reasoning or capture. Nothing he said or did can really excuse the fact he murdered a man.

I found the whole thing compelling to watch. The before, during and after. I don't agree with Rick murdering Martinez, or his rationalization for it, making it hard for me to like the character. He seems to be the character that has fallen the most after Michonne.

I may not like the 'hero' of the Walking Dead, but I do want to see what he does next.

Luke Sims
Melbourne, Australia

Rick is living through hell, please don't lose sight of that. He's going to do things from time to time that seem a bit questionable to us, here in our safe world, but I think if you position yourself in his frame of mind--while his actions aren't honorable they can seem a bit more reasonable when cast in a certain skewed perspective that would come from living around so much death.

When you've killed so many human looking things and shot friends so they wouldn't become those things... taking a human life would eventually become a very easy thing given the right circumstances.

Rick's come a long way.

Hey Kirkman—

Read №36. Classic, classic issue.

QUESTION! Now that Lori is in month 9, does she pee when she sneezes?

Cheers,
Andrew Garcia-Price

I don't know that that's all that common among pregnant women...

Hello

First let me say that I am a huge fan so much so that I buy both single issue and trade as they come out and want to get the hardcover soon, and love where the comic are going, somehow you have captured, depression, joy, love, hate, humiliation and just the horror of human nature. I was shocked at №36 letter hacks and people hate for №33 I mean maybe because here in Canada we have tv that has people that swear and, nudes on normal cable tv, people in the u.s and other places just aren't used to violence, I found NOTHING wrong with the comic, in fact I think its great that you show the real nature of people without law or rule, what do people think will happen in a situation like that, rapist don't become cured because of zombie outbreak, killers will kill, and well crime goes on, this is why people freak out on planes when there is a plane emergency they are kept out of the truth and can't handle when the real stuff happens.

The comic isn't even that bad it could be a lot worse and for those fellow fans that want to know how, well for one the story could have arced really bad, since a prisoner could have been a child rapist, or something, and that could freak a lot of people out, but hey just to show how bad something could get in a situation like that.

Now on to the good parts, the comic has captured how good people do what they do to protect the ones they love, and when you have to look after yourself and others this comic shows just how far a person can go.

The comic has a mix of happy and sad depression and bliss, for one I'm glad that people still want to get married in the story or to lighten the mood they focus on the kids and the fact that even though they know what's going on they don't, I mean classic scene is when he asks if she is still his girlfriend over something so stupid we wouldn't even think about.

So anyway you guys are doing a great job keep it up!

Thanks!

Now onto my questions

1. are we going to find out who the father of the baby is?

The matter is pretty much settled at this point. It's really not an issue.

2. any major twists coming up

Always.

3. I know that things might end, and the comic series can't last forever but I wanted to know if it ends will you continue the world with a new story with new people, and bring old friends back into the new one.

There are no plans for this book to end any time even remotely soon. So there's no reason to even talk about a spin-off series.

4. ok more pages in black and white, but will there ever be colour, nothing wrong with it the way it is but wanted to ask?

No. Never. Not until I'm washed up and doing anything I can to make a buck--then I might. I mean, let's be honest here. I've got a kid to worry about.

anyway thats it, wanted to let you guys know that you have fans up here in canada "A"

p.s. anyone else notice that taking a ring from a corpse is really really gross, hope she boils it first hahaha

Marlon

I'm sure Glenn washed it off before giving it to her.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I just finished reading issue 33 of the Walking Dead, and for the first time in my life felt compelled to write a letter to a comic book.

I just want to say that I'm shocked, and I'm not going to ramble about not reading this book anymore, 'cause I love it (As I love to read all your books), but I do think that I will not be reading this issue again in a long time.

I understand this was the effect that the issue was intended for (Shock), and again, this is not a critic, is a statement of facts, I still love the book, I loved the issue, but I'm shocked (it even made me look away from it at one point), so there, if that was the effect that you were looking for, at least in my humble person you got it.

I know this letter is useless, but I felt this issue so much that I just had to write to you.

Loving this book and everything you write, keep up the good work.

Oscar Balderas

Useless, I think not. It's good to hear the book is having an effect on people. Very cool.

Kirkman

a question for you...

How come in vampire movies everyone already knows what a vampire is but in zombie movies no one has ever heard of a zombie before?

Good question, and I really don't know the answer. Maybe it has to do with the fact that zombies, MODERN zombies (created by Romero, based on I Am Legend by Richard Matheson) were only introduced in the late '60s while people have believed in Vampires for hundreds of years. I don't think anyone in real life has ever actually "believed" in zombies. So in Vampire movies--people aren't really reacting to the movies they've seen--and that's all they'd be doing in zombie movies and that'd be silly. Hey--maybe I did answer it.

In The Lost Boys, Salem's Lot, the Buffyverse etc. the struggle is for people to actually believe that vampires exist. Once they acknowledge that vampires are real they immediately know all the other aspects of the mythos i.e. stakes, crosses, holy water, garlic and the like.

in the Romero zombie movies, the Living Dead series, Resident Evil, Undead and even in your own fine series while people know the word "zombie" no one seems familiar with the cannon of zombie film and literature. just once i would like to see a zombie movies where someone is like, "wow zombies, okay. shoot them in the brain, don't let them bite you, etc."

from a storytelling perspective I suppose that vampires have enough of a personality that you don't need to establish the rules of encountering vampires in order for the threat they pose to be dramatic, whereas with zombies the drama is in the protagonists learning how to stay alive as the zombies have no real personality or character.

still is there an in-plot explanation for this? were all the guys who watched zombie movies eaten at some sort of SciFi convention in the first hours of the outbreak? were they all dangerously over or underweight and thus easily bitten and turned? are there zombie movies in the world of The Walking Dead and, if so, where are the zombie movie aficionados?

Love the series,
Scott

If there are zombie movies in the world of The Walking Dead, I'd imagine nobody has seen them. It'd just be silly for them to be using movies as a guideline for what to do. It's shatter the semblance of realism, I'd think.

Robert and TWD,

It's been a while since I've written to you regarding the book. I definitely enjoyed the Woodbury arc. I think the character arc for Rick, Tyreese, Hershel, et al, is amazing. I believe when you first set out to write this book you thought to yourself, "In most Zombie stories there's always an evil-survivor-leader (i.e. The Mayor of Woodbury), but we really never see how that guy got so twisted." And then you came up with Rick. The loss of his hand, the willingness to do whatever is necessary to protect his family, and the moral ambiguity of his actions are all more signs that I believe that ultimately this will be the story of Carl (Luke) vs. Rick (Darth Vader). Just a thought.

Only time will tell.

Questions: Seriously, with the growing popularity of zombie films (i.e. J. Michael Straczynski adapting Max Brooks' "World War Z" for Brad Pitt's production company, 28 Weeks later, Day of the Dead remake, Romero's "Diary of the Dead," etc.) how have you not been approached to adapt TWD? Do you think they're (they being

"Hollywood execs") waiting for you to reach a certain number of issues before you're worthy of an adaptation?

Kermet Merl Key

The ways of Hollywood are strange and mysterious. Who knows why it hasn't happened yet. I doubt it's the number of issues published.

And with that, folks, we wrap up another monstrous letters column.

This MAY be the last issue that ships before San Diego—so please, come on by and shake my hand if you come to that thing. I'll be at the Image and Marvel booths for scheduled signings. Should be easy to find.

I'll see you all back here again very soon.

-Robert



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hi readers, welcome back to another Letter Hacks! Amanda here. #40 seems to be one of those "exhale" issues, that give us a moment to breathe. Dale survived, Lori and Carol are making amends, Rick SHAVED. Surely, we're not in store for something dire in the moments ahead... surely. There's a fun letter below that asks about plot and character moments, and Robert talks a little bit about his process—something you all get to see first-hand in the Cutting Room Floor section. Aren't you Deluxe readers lucky? Hope you're enjoying all that precious insight; it wasn't always available! For now, some classic letters below, see you back here again soon!

Okay, I know we're putting out issues fast now. It seems like I'm doing a new letters column every week. Assuming there are no printer delays we will be putting out issues on a better than monthly schedule over the next few issues.

The statue by Clayburn Moore has been completed and should be available in stores very soon, I'm think over the next few months. The second piece of the diorama, an extra zombie coming after Rick has just been sculpted and painted and it's damn awesome. When the whole thing is done and can be put together it's going to be sweet.

When it's all done it'll be a cool scene of Rick facing off against three separate zombies. Cool stuff. Clayburn Moore is a genius.

Now, let's dive into the old mailbag and see what's what.

Robert,

I got into your book because I was bored. To tell you the truth, I really don't like comics very much. I liked "Wolverine: Origins" when that came out, which I also read out of boredom, but I usually don't give comics a chance. I was at my friend's house, I had just finished shooting a scene

for an independent film I've been working on, I didn't have anything else to do, and my friend, was ironically enough, acting like a zombie. Let's just say he smokes Marlboro Greens more than he probably should.

Anyway, so I was looking around for something to do, I mean, he had no cable, he didn't want to play Smash Bros, and I didn't want to go home because I knew the moment I got there, I would start editing the scene and I really wanted a break, so finally, I saw a few graphic novels sitting on the coffee table. They read "The Walking Dead" and they were volumes one through four. I figured "what the hell, I'll just flip through some pages. It's better than nothing." I flipped through the first four or so pages of the first issue and suddenly my mind nagged me to go back and actually read them, so I did, and to make a long story shorter, I've been hooked ever since.

Recently, I was finally able to catch up to all the released issues and, mark my words, one day, you or your agent will get a call from me where I will ask to have a meeting about making "The Walking Dead" into a live action feature film, that is, if no one beats me to it. By then, I will have a little more credibility and higher stature as a film-maker. It's your story telling, I feel so drawn to it, so immersed by it, and what makes it so bizarre is that you are able to do this through a medium that I personally don't really even like. To me, comic books have always reminded me of looking through story boards, which is work to me. Not my cup of tea, but your work is different. I just wanted to let you know that you are working on such an amazing project, that even a person that cares not for the medium, loves it still.

That has got to count for something. Oh, out of curiosity, hypothetically speaking, if a film version of your story were to be made, would you rather it be in black and white? I've thought about this a lot, and to me, it would make for a nice contrasting style. I know it probably wouldn't be as marketable or distributable in the eyes of a run of the mill Hollywood studio, but

artistically, I would rather see it sans color, like the book. It would also make all the special effects more convincing, and seeing as how there is so much blood in it, it might be the only way to get out of having an NC-17 rating.

Yeah, I don't really know. It'd be neat if it were in black and white, and you've got some valid reasons and benefits listed here, but I'm really not sure. If I had my druthers I'd certainly at least push for washed-out color, like Saving Private Ryan but maybe even a little closer to gray.

I was also wondering, what cover art for TWD do you like the best? The cover art for issue nine is my favorite as far as composition, style, color, and even beauty, but I love the symbolism, irony, and dichotomy shown in the cover for issue 21, especially by the addition of that one lone butterfly (which is probably what Carl and Sophia are looking at).

I really like Tony's covers to 23 and 24 quite a bit. Charlie and Cliff's cover to issue 28 is one of my all-time favorites for sure. It's always changing but for now I'd probably have to go with 33 being my favorite but the covers for 44-48 are goddamn stunning. You'll all see them very soon. They're great.

Mostly, I just wanted to let you know, that from a fellow storyteller to another, I really admire your work, I am drawn to it so much that it's hard for me to think about it objectively. I care about these characters man. Anyway, I hope you print this, if you do, I'll get to keep it as a memento of the first pseudo-conversation we had prior to hopefully working with you in the future.

Sincerely,
Chuck Meré

Okay, you've got my contact info future-Spielberg. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Mr. Kirkman,

I've been reading Walking Dead since the very first comic, so I'm a longtime faithful reader. I know that you've been getting a lot of heat concerning the rape and later retribution of Michonne. I thought that I would give you a female view on this subject... and I'm not just writing as a

female reader, but also as a rape survivor.

First of all... to all those men who wrote in complaining that you "took" power away from Michonne during the rape scene (which actually occurred off-screen) - the fact is, that you were showing the character of the Governor trying to take power from Michonne. Guess what? Rape happens every day. Its ugly and its vicious, and its plain evil... but it happens to white women, black women, Asian women, Hispanic women.... well, you get my point? The rapist has no conscience... he doesn't care about the pain and suffering that he is putting his victim through. And it's a pain that lasts long after the actual act of the rape is done. One thing I've learned is that you gradually go from being a rape victim into a rape survivor. It's not an easy process and it usually takes years, but the thing is, you're never the same person again.

I want you to know, that as a rape survivor, I was not offended by Michonne's rape. The setting of the story is post-apocalypse, with all the barriers of civilization being broken down. Have your readers forgotten the quick breakdown of civil behavior during the aftermath of the Katrina hurricane? In reading your last comic, I think that the point you are trying to drive home is that man - and woman - can quickly lose grip of their humanity in extreme situations. Unfortunately, there are predators in the world who don't even need the pressure of a catastrophe to make them into rapists and murderers.

As for Michonne's retribution.... yes, it was extremely violent, yet these readers who are complaining had no problem with zombies eating somebody's intestines or even the Governor hacking off Rick's hand? I don't condone extreme violence, but I also know that its been a part of human history since the dawn of time.

Would I wish to have the same opportunity for retribution with my own rapist? At times, I do have a fantasy of him burning in hell.... He was a serial rapist, and only he and God knows how many women he's hurt in his lifetime... but I don't know if I would want to be carrying the emotional burden of killing - or even just torturing - another human being with me. Yet, in Michonne's situation, there is no longer police to serve and protect, or courts of law to set up trial and punishment. The Governor had hurt so many people in the past, without a single

thought of the pain he was inflicting on others, so I personally have no problems with Michonne acting as judge and jury in this case. The only alternative is her just running away earlier with Rick, leaving the Governor there to continue to hurt other people. And I'm not saying that she did it just out of a sense of protecting others - she definitely was making it personal retribution. But who can say how they would personally react in such extreme circumstances?

After what I call my Bad Incident, I couldn't even bear to watch violent movies for years - including my beloved horror movies. It took time for me to recover - I'd grown up watching all the classic horror movies - but now I often see horror movies as a commentary on our own society.

I think you really hit home with this when Rick hit Martinez with the camper without a second thought. Martinez should have not been so sneaky and had instead talked to the group about perhaps helping the women and children left at his camp, instead of just running off, so he does share some responsibility for his own death. The fact that Rick later questions his actions and his lack of remorse, asking if he what he's done is evil... that is what truly separates the type of person he is from the Governor.

Okay... besides all this "deep" stuff about the story and characters... I want to say that I LOVE your comic, and I'm glad that you are not afraid to tackle controversial storylines and characters. Please keep up the good work!

Valeria

Thank you very much for writing in and sharing your experience. I really appreciate it.

Dear Robert,

One of the main reasons I find The Walking Dead to be the greatest book out is the questions of morality which are raised on nearly a monthly basis. In a world populated by constant horror and death, ethics clearly change. Most recently, Rick's murder of Martinez displayed a sort of kill or be killed ethics. As a police officer, Rick represented one of the last standing enforcers of the old world's sense of right and wrong. However, at this point in the story, the issue of right

and wrong is nearly gone completely. While most people's sense of morality allows for one to value the life of their family over others, I get the feeling that Rick would perform the most heinous sorts of acts to ensure his family's safety. Yet even as Rick's actions become less and less noble in the traditional sense of morality, I still think he's doing the "right" thing. As a student of philosophy, these gray areas fascinate me.

I was wondering if you have had the chance to read The Road (2006) by Cormac McCarthy. The book has many parallels to TWD. The story follows a father and son trying to survive in a post-apocalyptic world. While there are no flesh eating zombies, the father and son must escape constant danger from starvation and fend off attacks from bands of cannibals. At one point in the story, the author even refers to the father and son as "the walking dead." Like TWD, hope has been nearly destroyed by the state of the world, and morality has been whittled down to bare survivalism. It's a great, quick read, and judging by your work, I think you'd appreciate it.

Thanks for getting me into comics.
Greg Theilmann, San Diego, CA

The Road, huh? I'll have to check it out.

Robert Kirkman,

"issue 37-- which will be IN STORES before the end of MARCH." Not that I'm bitching but why do you set yourself up for the readers to fill up Letter Hacks with complaints about the book not being on time?

Anyway, great comic book! I've been with you since issue 8 and am never disappointed with the story or art. You have several very good comics out every month (well, almost) and for that I don't mind the wait. Please, keep up the good work.

Matt Coppins

Well, there's not much I can do once a book is out of my hands. There are a lot of times when things seem 100% ready to happen... and then don't. For instance, I said 39 would be out two weeks after 38. Now, I turned it in two weeks after 38, so in a perfect world it would have shipped two weeks after 38. But I forgot it was around the time of the big Comic-Con

International in San Diego. During this time everyone and their brother is printing up everything but the kitchen sink for the con. So 39 got lost in the shuffle and as I type this, still isn't out, but looks like it's going to be three or even four weeks after issue 38. I'm hoping for four.

Now, 39 isn't even out yet and I'm writing this letters column to send in with issue 40, with 39 pushed back a bit, this issue should be in stores sooner than a month after issue 39, but y'know... I don't know for sure.

I get excited too, that's what it really burns down to. I like to get these books out and I try to give you letters column readers a heads up. I really should stop, though... it's getting ridiculous. So I'm not going to be making predictions anymore. I'm just going to try and turn the books in as fast as I can and keep working.

We'll see how that works out.

Dear Kirkman:

Greetings and salutations, I recently had a fest with your Walking Dead, from №1 to №36 last night.

I usually spend some time with my friends, mostly rolling polyhedrons, watching geeky movies, drinking coffee and talking about you (yeah, you) and your colleagues. That's how I knew that the Ultimate Cable guy had made a comic book about zombies, survival horror and stuff.

At first, I must confess, didn't have much faith because all the zombie comics I had read in the past were pretty ugly (I mean, Resident Evil comic books, anyone?), but I when I knew that was a B/W, old-school, made by a zombie geek comic; well I had at least to see it.

And well, what can I say? I just loved it!

I know that many readers can say at least the same, but the reason of writing these lines is to support you in the now controversial issue about the raping, the racism and the pornographic violence in your comic (?).

Please don't listen seriously to all that aggressive words from the kind of people who need the Comic Code Authority to

decide for them what can and what cannot read, I like to think that we're all grown up guys who can difference the reality from the fiction.

I could say something about the behavior of ordinary human beings in extreme situations and illustrate it with the raping camps and other aberrations proper of the wartimes, but I don't like to make politics of an entertainment product which is not oriented to do it. And it won't be anything we haven't heard before.

So what I want to say is thank you for being honest with yourself, your characters and us, your devoted public.

Sincerely,
Juan M. Trillo

PS: Please forgive the broken English.

Honestly didn't notice any.

PS2: I loved the Christmas story in issue №34, and it made me think: what about a backup story of each main character before the zombie infestation? Like an average day in the life of (not like LOST, but well, yeah, exactly like LOST). Think about it.

Yeah, I'm not going to be purposefully cribbing something from LOST any time soon. At least not until issue 43. I do try to keep this book as original as possible.

Thanks for writing, I plan to stick to my guns on all issues. Don't worry.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

This issue was pretty okay, dawg. In Idol-ese, the beginning was "karaoke", but the last half or more was "magic". I kinda enjoyed your little backstory in the letters column this ish! 1990? Why such a late bloomer? Didn't most people Grow Up Reading comics? Like me for instance! If you were born in '78 or '79, I was probably reading comics b4 you were Born. I dunno if you answered this question in №37's column, but I'd like to ask what really got you into comics specifically...was it one series, a particular issue? My older brother got me reading comics by, well, giving me some of his to read; probably the only nice thing he ever did for me! I guess if I'd have to go to a particular series that

jump-started my collecting career, it'd be Avengers.

My dad got me into it. I'd read a comic here or there before sixth grade but I was really into baseball cards. The baseball card shop in my small Kentucky town also sold comics. So one time when my dad had taken me there--he bought about 12 consecutive issues of IRON MAN. It was the Armor Wars II Mandarin/Fin Fang Foom stuff by John Byrne and John Romita Jr. He had been a huge fan of The Metal Men when he was a kid and he thought IRON MAN was a modern offshoot of that book. I stumbled onto those books and next time I went into that store... I bought some comics with my baseball cards.

If there's still time I'd like you to warn the TWD characters taking the van to look for the...place with more weaponry, that even if they do find it they might not have a prison to come back to! And the Woodbury guys already are searching and have their weapons. Funny that Walking Dead and JLA Classified have the exact same issue count, huh? Both at №37. Funnier still, they're making a big deal out of Carlos D'Anda and Kid Amazo.

There was a wedding this issue. The priest-guy.. Rick?..even read from the Bible. I guess you do that at weddings. Most religious thing I've seen in this book ever. In the flashback at the beginning--I Think it was a flashback--Shane and Lori were talking about the government? Was that b4 the plague (or whatever) had spread too badly, or what? It occurs to me that no actual zombies, or walking dead guys, were used this issue!

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

The flashback in issue 37 continued from the flashback in issue 7. So it was during the time Rick was in a coma, but after the zombie plague had started.

Robert, (is "Ye, Gods" played out?)

I recently fired off an email to Invincible (LOVE IT), and now, after having just read №37 of TWD, I'm sending one here. I used to write letters to comics when I was younger, but none were ever printed; however, due to the fact that you print more letters than anyone I've ever seen--and, that

you answer them yourself--there was an incentive for me to sit at my computer and try again.

You're in luck. I'm thinking about printing your letter.

I'm 36 years old and have been a comic collector since the age of 12/13. Although I did get into the traditional superhero stuff e.g. Daredevil, Spider-man, etc. I also liked darker, more mysterious material, as well. When Frank Miller did his run on Daredevil with Mazzuchelli, it appealed to me so much more than the ad nauseum repetitions of a new super villain every issue with no true feeling of consequence. These days, titles like Sin City, 100 bullets, Criminal, etc. jazz me up a lot more than crossover after crossover of mindless men-in-tights drivel. This love for more adult oriented storytelling, combined with my love for horror movies and great advice from 2 wise, wise men (what's up, Neil and Chris!!) brought me to TWD.

I'd love to go on and on about how much fun I have reading this book, Robert, but it's nothing you haven't heard before. What I would like to address briefly is my continued hope that you will NEVER, EVER pull any punches or tame your material down because a bunch of sissy-boys might get offended or some sanctimonious pseudo-intellectual might send you some whiny screed on how this or that is a reflection of societal oppression blah, blah, blah. I'm referring, of course, to some of the reactions you got to your depiction of the whole Governor/Michonne situation. Especially, when some people tried to speak for your inner thoughts and beliefs, particularly by accusing you of being sexist/racist. I'm impressed by how you handled those letters by not collapsing into a heap of jelly and defending your story. This is a cruel world--both in the real world and, especially, in the TWD one--and bad things happen. It's unfortunately symptomatic of our PC society to label anything perceived as negative towards certain individuals/ groups as racist, etc. Not to overstate it, but how dare they pretend to know what you think, Robert, or, for that matter, what the rest of us do!

Anyways, I've got so much more to say to praise the unbelievable work that you, Charlie, Cliff and Rus are doing on this title, but I'd like to get printed, so here are some numbered questions:

I do print some letters that don't have questions... I swear.

1. Is Charlie as amped about doing this book forever as you yourself are? Man, I hope so. His artwork is EXACTLY how this book needs to look!

I wouldn't say he's as amped as me, but he's definitely on board for the long haul. I know he enjoys it but I wouldn't presume to have him on board for life. He's not going anywhere any time soon.

2. For the first time, in issue №37, we got somewhat of a flashback with Lori thinking about Shane. Does this mean you may use flashbacks to give us--FINALLY--some backstory on characters like Michonne? We're dying to read it, man!

The first flashback was actually at the beginning of issue 7. This is the second. I don't plan on using them too often but maybe every now and then--and only when the event ties in with what I've got going on in the main story.

3. In the interview at the back of №37, you mentioned that at the beginning you had the story mapped out up to its current position. Do you have the next 37 more or less figured out?

Oh, yeah. Definitely. There is also stuff that would be taking place way after this stuff happening now that I had planned in the beginning. It was a very rough outline but I always knew I was leading up to this stuff. And y'know, since then I've been plotting further and further ahead as I go along... of course-- there's still stuff I always make up on the fly while I'm writing... it keeps things fresh.

4. Will Carl ever take his hat off? Dale, I understand, because it designates him clearly as "Dale", but Carl?

He takes it off from time to time.

5. Can you promise us loyal readers that you will tell the story you want to tell for us grown-ups here, and not balk at showing terrible things? I know you haven't yet, but I hope the whole tempest over the torture thing hasn't left you gun-shy.

Trust me, there's more to come on that front. By the time we reach issue 50 it'll be clear that I'm not pulling any punches.

Thank you for your time and for doing your part to keep comics a legitimate medium!

By the way, I also love the Ant-man title and anxiously look forward to The Wolf-man!!

Jonathan Radmer

Yay, The Irredeemable Ant-Man and The Astounding Wolf-Man! Very cool, thanks for reading.

Kirkman--

Issue №37! Yay!

Yay-fuckin'-yay-yay! Really beautiful work, all around. QUESTION! Do all the character moments get written at the same speed as the plot-driven stuff? Or do they accrue over time?

Good stuff,
Andrew Garcia-Price

Hm. Well, the issues themselves in script form get written chronologically almost as you would read it. I start on page one and write until I'm on page 22 but before that there's a plot stage where I map everything out on paper. The character stuff is scrawled out in notes and sometimes things get shifted back into another issue to save space or so I can lead up to a moment. The plot stuff and the character stuff is more often than not just written at the same time as I go along. Does that explain it at all?

It would be very cool if you guys decide to include a poster in one of the upcoming issues.

I really want one.

Good job guys, this comic is great!

Jose Pinal

Well, there's not a poster contained in this issue, but there IS an ad for one. You'll find it shortly after this letters column. You can buy it in whatever store you purchased this comic. Tell them Dave sent you!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I am writing this to let you know that I love this book. I just recently got on board and started with the trades and quickly got caught up so now I'm up to issue 37. This series is one of the best out there! I think one of the better sequences I've read thus far is the one with Rick questioning his humanity after he killed Martinez who was essentially spying for the governor and his bitches. I loved it and it spoke to me. I could conceive of myself, put in a similar situation, doing the exact same thing for my family. Making those choices wouldn't be so tough once you put it in perspective.

I also have a gripe to pick with all those people who wrote in and complained about the extended torture scene with Michonne. I don't get what they are upset about at all. The book is called *The Walking Dead* not *The Walking Unliving Enjoying Lunch In Your Garden*. (*but maybe it should be? -Robert*) First and foremost this is a zombie book by the title alone. One should expect all the violence and agony that goes into something like that. And like you said, if people get turned off by one book then what's that say about them? I myself loved the torture scene and I felt it was very gratifying in every respect. You made the governor a complete prick and we, well most of us, wanted to see that extended torture scene to see him get his comeuppance. I feel that those people who wrote in complaining about it are part of the conservative America that I despise. I mean come on, if pushing the boundaries with some sex scenes isn't going to set off alarms with these people why should a torture scene? The way I see it is it's hypocritical of them. Comic artists and writers have been fighting the good fight for freedom of expression for a long time and you can't get your panties in a bunch with a title such as this if you have a problem with a little violence. I say keep up the good work and giving us great stories month in and month out.

Well, in defense of the people who balked at the horror... this series, according to the sales figures, is reaching a pretty broad audience. I've gotten mail from people who just read Marvel books who have given this title a shot. So, we're not ALL horror fans here, who are used to seeing and hearing far worse than what's portrayed here in our favorite movies.

And that's okay. I'd like this book to appeal to as wide an audience as possible. And it's

COOL that stuff in this book can make people flinch and respond so strongly. Doesn't mean I'm going to quit doing such things, just to appease those fans... just like I'm not going to put in more gore and more zombie action just to appease those fans.

This book is what it is, and really, the most important member of the audience is myself. Meaning, if I don't like it, I can't write it... so thus far I've just been doing what interests ME at whatever given moment and I'll probably just continue doing that, because that keeps me interested in the series and keeps me interested in writing scripts.

Keeping Charlie interested isn't a bad thing either, but I think I'm doing that as well.

So anyway, I don't mind the crazy response from fans. At the end of the day, it just means people are vested in the series and sucked into the story enough to garner a reaction... and really, that's more than I could have ever hoped for with this book. So it's all good.

That said, to reiterate about the interactions with Rick, Tyreese, and everyone else there it's just pure magic. I read these books now to see what happens next to these people because you've made me care about them. The zombies are an afterthought almost, because the real drama is what's happening behind those walls.

Heh--some issues they're certainly an afterthought for me!

Thanks again for taking the time to read this and I can't wait to see what Lori tells Rick in 38! I've got goosebumps already!

Sincerely,
Gabriel

Well, I hope it went the way you DIDN'T expect it to. Thanks for writing.

That's all the time we have here at Letter Hacks central. Be on the lookout yesterday for issue 41. We're incorporating brand new time machine technology to get you that issue BEFORE this one. This time I swear! We're on time, baby!!

Sigh.

See you next issue.

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

What a slow, sad build these last few moments for Carol are. Amanda here, and of all the deaths we've encountered in THE WALKING DEAD so far, this is one of the melancholier, just with how normal everything seems until it's very clear not. For all in the classic Hacks who were complaining about "filler issues" this should keep you on your toes from now on...

We're fast approaching the end of this story arc so if you have any burning questions that need answering, drop us a line. We'll be answering some new mail in #43! Until then, enjoy these old letters.

And here we are at issue 41. I'm preparing for San Diego, the big Comic-Con International and I'm trying to make sure this issue goes to the printer before I leave... so, y'know... no time for the chatty chat.

So let's dive into the letters!

Wee! (probably not all that appropriate after the end of this issue, but y'know, whatever).

Greetings Kirkland,

I've been keeping up with the walking dead since issue one, never read any of your other stuff. However as a 29 year old black male there are some concerns I have with your writing.... I'm concerned that you're going to let all these outside opinions about you being "Racist" affect the writing of the greatest zombie comic ever written. I'm proud of my black heritage, but I honestly felt that the events that happened to Michonne in issue 29 were not the result of a racist writer, but in actuality was the fucked up hand survivors get dealt in a world full of cut throats and zombies. I was horrified by what happened to homegirl in issue 29 but it only made the book a more intense read. (besides Rick is missing a hand, that's pretty brutal, too.) I consider your book an entertaining glimpse into a world of "Survival Horror" I don't relate to any of the characters any more or

less because their race. I look at how well each character can adapt to the situations they are confronted with. I read the angry letters in issue 35 and although the whole "chocolate rape fantasy" accusations were funny, don't lose any sleep over it, man.

The Walking Dead is hands down the best zombie comic I've ever read. Please don't let your team get all soft over a few angry fans. You have the support and \$2.99 of this BLACK man every time I hit the comic shop.

One of your biggest and BLACKEST fans,

G. Washington

Thanks so much for the words of encouragement. I know I've said this many times over the last few letters columns, but again, there's no worry of me curbing my plans to appease the fan mail. I'm just doing what I want. It's what I've been doing since the beginning and the book is doing very well, so I don't have any plans to change the way I do things now.

Dear Robert,

My name is Martín Casanova, and I'm from Argentina. Before Marvel Zombies, I hadn't read anything from you, and that mini-series was a pleasant surprise. I don't think of myself as a zombie fan, but I loved "28 days later..." and "Shaun of the Dead".

I've been a comic book fan since 1989 (yeah, that Tim Burton movie...) and nowadays I have my own Buenos Aires based comic book company. It's just taking off, but we had 600 people at our last graphic novel presentation, and that's really promising, right?

Anyway, I just finished reading the first 33 issues of The Walking Dead in two days and I'm simply hooked. I love it. And reading it from a publisher point of view, I can't help but wonder "Why haven't I thought of this?". The book is a fun read, it's well written, and you never know what's coming next. It

reminds me of the best Preacher issues. Oh, and the artwork is just amazing.

I think I'm three or four issues behind, but I don't know what it'll be like waiting 30 days to get the following chapter... While I read it, I thought it'd do a great live action series. If they let Nip/Tuck get away with all the gross operations...

Congratulations on a great book that is enjoyable anywhere in the world.

Best regards,
Martín Casanova

Glad you liked it, thanks for writing.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Well, first off let me start by giving a huge CONGRATS on joining the parenting world, I hope you both enjoy every up and down as much as I do.

Okay with that said...

I have decided to finally write once and for all....

I will begin with a little info about myself, I am a 28 year old single mother....

I became addicted to TWD since I came across the first issue, and I still am a huge fan, and although I am not some goth girl I have been horribly obsessed with zombies since I was a kid....actually I am in the middle of writing my own take on it....but that's another letter.....I have to say yours has been one of my favorite storylines in this genre.... with that said I just wanted to point out that since the whole brew-ha-ha over the Michonne ordeal and torture of the gov and all....

Well I have noticed almost if not every printed letter was written by a guy.....

That is true, I don't always read the names of the letter writers, so it's not something I notice unless it's in the body of the email. But yeah, it seems we've got a largely male fan base here on the book. I try to print all the letters from women just to try and even things out.

Now I am not some crazy bra burning man hating type of gal....

I just thought it might be a nice change to see

what a woman thinks about it....

So here it goes....

I myself relate very personally with what Michonne went through in the comic....and to be honest I was hoping for more brutality against that douche bag.

I have read all sorts of things about this and yes it is probably a dead (no pun intended) subject but I just had to write...

Don't worry... the way things are going it may never die...

First off let's start by saying that if anyone thinks it was racist...well....that is utterly absurd.....mainly due to the fact that Michonne is the most bad ass out of all the women, and with that..... she was the only female character strong enough to pull through such an awful situation and fight back for herself...she actually epitomizes the term strong black woman....a lesser woman would have died.....or ratted out the others.... so let's just let that issue go shall we....if it is racist to have 3 of most interesting and strong characters be african-american.... than I suppose I am confused about what racist means.

Second,rape yes is very ugly and scary and it is a million times worse in "real" life....and unfortunately it may happen to someone if one day zombies were to take over the world, and the living consequently were forced into a post-apocalyptic mad max survival type of world...but what is scarier is that it happens everyday...

Instead of writing nasty hate mail to the author of a fictional comic character maybe it would suit those people more to put their efforts and voices towards a different aspect of society that may deal with "real" people that were "really" raped....

The sad fact is that stuff goes on every single flipping day, and you don't see people getting all pissed off about it....and why?

Because they don't see it, it is just some far away idea....well I am so sorry that while you were reading your comic about the walking dead, with images of god knows how many different types of violence and gore, you were offended by the image of a woman being raped....sorry to burst your bubble, and that you had to find out the world isn't a safe candy filled land with smiling unicorns and

caramel filled chocolate trees..... welcome to the human fucking race and thanks for finally joining the group....oh and why not be a bit more creeped out about the people who were just a bit too eager to show how much they enjoyed that scene....

And to the persons who thought the torture was too brutal....ugh, the f*cker deserved way worse, and I wish it would have been the whole issue....but that is just me....

Maybe it would happen less in real life if someone was faced with getting horribly mutilated and tortured..... but who cares about that.... just continue on along ranting about a fictional world while the real one around you burns...but I suppose that now includes me and I am a hypocrite.....but at least I notice it and admit it.....and getting over the denial is the hardest part.

So here's to you Mr. Kirkman....keep writing intriguing storylines.....and shocking the shit out of people... it may be the only time they will ever recognize the world around them and not look away....

I will continue to buy your comics and be a huge fan.....I sure do hope you print this.... although I doubt they will since it is so long....but hell if you cut out the profanities and most of the subject matter perhaps it will be more tolerable in print.....and it would just be freaking cool as hell to see my name in my favorite comic.....congrats again on the little one...

Sincerely,
Karith Cashion

Oh, we love long letters here at Letter Hack's central. And don't mind the profanity, we're all about that too. Thanks for taking the time to write.

YO Robert,

Chiming in late about the story with Michonne, I reserved judgment until the story concluded unlike many of these bleeding hearts who just immediately lashed out at you for your story then "dropped your book" (morons). A story with a STRONG BLACK WOMAN (god forbid) who came back from the bad place she was in and then kicked the ass of her attacker (Go Michonne). What did people expect from a HORROR

comic, fuzzy bunnies and easter baskets?! Screw that! keep the F'D up stories coming Kirkman, that's what I at least expect from a HORROR comic with ADULT themes. Your doing a kick ass job considering the number of titles you write every month. Until the Aliens show up a hundred issues from now MAKE. MINE. KIRKMAN. Invincible, Walking Dead, Ultimate X-Men! What am I missing? I know you're writing more.

Matt McIntyre

Irredeemable Ant-Man (for a few more issues at least), Marvel Zombies, The Astounding Wolf-Man and a few things that are yet to be announced. I like to keep busy.

Man... I hope things go back to normal with the mail soon. I really, REALLY appreciate the support but it does start to feel like I'm getting the same letter over and over.

Dear TWD,

I have to start by saying that this comic has completely amazed me. I've never been into comics let alone collecting them but since I started reading TWD I've done little else. What originally attracted me to this comic was Tony Moore, I've been a big fan of his in the last year or so and had slowly started checking into comics he was involved with when I discovered TWD. Since I bought my first issue about three months ago I haven't stopped purchasing anything with its title attached to it. I want to let everyone involved with this comic know that it is pure perfection from start to finish, with a captivating story that keeps you on the edge of your seat every issue to the amazing illustrations. I would also like you to know that I love the letter hacks, I do, in fact, read each and everyone. The questions that your fans write in about are great most of the time and I love the fact that you take the time to write responses. Thank you Mr. Kirkman and everyone else involved with the creation and or printing of this amazing story.

Your appreciative fan
Josh Hart

Well, sir, thanks so much for the far-to-kind words. It's always good to hear about people picking up the book and really liking it. It's good to know there are some people here to replace all

the people who are quitting the book due to all the violence and racism.

As a employee of Wal-mart, laughed my butt off when they got busted looting Wal-mart!!!!Thanks for the book!!!!!!!!!!!!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

Hey—I used to work at Wal-Mart, too! We can be Wal-Mart buddies! I mean, ahem—we can be Wal-Mart buddies!!!!!!!!!! (better?)

Hey

I've been itching to write a letter to you for some time but I've never really had too much to say other than praise/questions and where would that get us ...nowhere.

I try to read the letter columns as much as possible (I might pick up something I didn't already know). Then I read in geek how much of your time it eats up. I wanted to say I love the columns 38 was awesome due to the numb skull talking about T&A and Religion (funny stuff). Anyways I thought I would tell you I think you're a lucky bastard to go from reading comics, to working at a store, to doing your thing with Funk- O-Tron, Image, and now working for marvel in such a short time (dream come true, right?). What's marvel got you slated for next?

A few things, but nothing I can talk about right now. It really is a dream come true. I mean, this is what I wanted to do as a kid and I'm doing it and making a decent living at it. It just doesn't get any better than this. I'm very content. And as far as the letters columns go, I do like doing them, but they are a bit of a pain in the ass, they take a bunch of time.

Have you ever seen a movie about the rapture from the 70's or 80's involving tattoos of the mark of the beast and it ending were the believers were cast out of the community and died of starvation? Total ridiculous and from my childhood but I can't find anything about it (like a name) it never hurts to ask right?

Envied by,
Ed Kelsey

Hm, I don't know what movie that is... but I'm interested. Can anyone else help us out? Please?

P.S. How big of a bite did you swallow to reprint 35?

Well, quite a big one. It took my cut of the profits from 35 and part of 36 to cover the printing bill on the corrected version of 35. It's my own damn fault though... I should have looked at those proofs. It kills me that it's the only time in the history of me doing comics that I've forgotten to look over the proofs... and a page got duplicated. I mean—what are the odds. So I basically wrote 35 for free and wrote 36 at a discount. But really, it was worth it to not have to put up with a misprinted book being out there. And the messed-up issue 35 repeated page 21 where 22 should have been... so there was no cliffhanger, the whole ending was blown. There was no way I could let that go out.

Live and learn.

Robert Kirkman!

Just finished №38, Letter Hacks and all. It made me come and piss and shit myself, all at the same time, while still keeping the comic in near mint condition (9.2). So two weeks until №39, huh? I'll believe it when I see it. But it's always worth the wait. In №38, what's up with the old long haired fella's overuse of the phrase, "You follow me?" Perhaps he's overused it before, and I just hadn't noticed.

Maybe Axel says it more than usual in 38 but he says that after almost every line of dialogue he's ever spoken. It's a personality tick, something he's done for as long as he's been in the book. Check back, you'll see.

Race was a big issue in №38's Hacks. I guess it's a big issue anywhere. Would you allow me to comment on the subject?

At least you asked first... I'm a bit sick of the subject, but go ahead.

If so, here's my comment!

As I understand big boy capital "S" Science, everyone is ultimately descended from folk who came from Africa. Google that shit if you don't believe me, each and every human being on this planet comes from one black man and one black woman. Different skin color, different hair color, stuff termed "racial characteristics" by one ass or another, is the result of evolution, human beings adapting to different climates and environments, and

shit. That's why the mole-men are so pale and have such big eyes.

*My creationist background argues a bit with your theory... and I've seen some paintings of Adam and Eve... and heck for that matter Jesus himself that go against your argument. **joking***

So we're all the same race, is basically what Science has uncovered here. Everything else is just cultural, different cultures conflicting for whatever reasons different cultures conflict. And that shit could be dealt with, so easy. Does the problem lie with the unwashed masses or the washed controllers of the masses? In the end, both master and slave castes, each and every one of us that is, are all trapped in some perverse geo-social realpolitik gangbang, forced to service an invisible partner who welds an iron three-pronged prick. That's what I think, anyway.

Wow... the discussion kinda ramped up there for a bit, eh?

What's with not using thought balloons or captions? Cinematic effect? I wonder how many people besides me had no idea it was June, 2004, TWD time, until you said it in a response to an email. I'm not saying you should denote the passage of time, having the characters and the readers unaware of exactly how much time has passed makes both groups disoriented and contributes to the suspense. But it is nice to have a frame of reference, I'm glad you let us in on that shit.

Well, it's not really important to the story and I really don't keep too close of an eye on it. So a running tally would just be a pain in my ass to keep track of.

You said you'd hook up anybody with a proper copy for the №35 misprint variant. Howsabout hookin' me up with the misprint in exchange for the regular one? And www.mycomicshop.com totally rules. Word.

I've only got like two or three of them myself... sorry. I've got none to spare.

Godboy Andrew J. Shaw wondered why no God in TWD. In my humblest opinion, I think after a zombie apocalypse, most everyone would wise up real quick to what's really going down with the whole bearded dude in the sky thing. It is my contention that one should not pander to the religious set anymore than one should pander to the people with what should be considered

cultural hang-ups.

Aside from my more than likely inappropriate joke earlier I really don't want to get into a huge religious debate. Living in Kentucky some of my closest friends are religious and I believe their faith would very much survive this type of situation. And there's nothing wrong with that. I believe that was touched on a bit in this very issue.

Presumptuousness Dept.: If you like Nick Cave you should check out Will Oldham's Bonnie Prince Billie stuff; you've probably heard it already but if you haven't, there you go. "I See A Darkness" is the best, I think. Do you watch any soap operas? "As the World Turns" is fun stuff.

Only "Passions" whenever I catch it on TV... that shit is INSANE!

Alright, man, Letter Hacks rules, the comic rules, everything totally rules.

Rev. Occulto

Thanks for writing.

Dear Robert (Bohab) Kirkman,

This comic is the sweetness. I had never picked up a comic in my 20 years until I happened to see that there was a George Ramono'ish zombie comic book out and that it was freaking awesome. Since then I have indulged in many different comics and have opened up to many different genre's of comic book. I have bought every single issue and trade and have both hardbound copies out because I want to see this book go beyond its 100th issue (which should be an extra spectacular double sized anniversary issue). But I got a favor to ask... please put me in one of the issues letter sections! Just a name in some random spot. It would be sweet to see my name in the comic book that got me into to comic books. Oh Yeah, and those people that say you're too edgy with your work and that you are racist... they're scared because they would be the first to go in the zombie holocaust.

Your fan till the apocalypse,
Matthew Barker

Consider your request honored. Call my silly, but I kinda like the idea of The Walking Dead not really having anniversary issues per se.

Issue 25 was a major turning point but not double-sized or special in any other way. Issue 50 will be the same way. Maybe... MAYBE when we make it to 100 we'll go all out... but really, I'm kinda against it at this point.

Dear Robert Kirkman

I have been reading the walking dead since it started (i forgot how many years ago).

Four years this October. Yes, we will have done 43 issues in 4 years. So we missed 5 months... in FOUR YEARS. Not bad for an independent comic... and I really honestly think that may be the best record for an independent comic out there... most definitely way up there.

I am a big zombie fan I read your marvel zombies collection and I thought that was a masterpiece man. You were my inspiration for my play Not Another Zombie Outbreak (I am only 16 years old). It was a smash hit at my school and it won an award for best One act play. You are the man with the plan when it comes to Zombies dude. I will follow you until you stop writing the Walking Dead (I'm not trying to sound like a stalker). also keep writing for Marvel, you add that little spice to them I haven't seen in a while. Keep up the good work and I hope you are honored that you are my inspiration.

Your fanboy
Zack Lippy aka Farmer Joe

I am so honored that I have inspired... Zippy Lippy, aka Farmer Joe.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

One of these issues, when someone shoots at a zombie, it's gonna turn out to be some dude with a hangover walking funny; I would love to see that!

So you're really an atheist, huh... or was that a Pagan? Sorry, I always get those two confused. I don't think it'll stop me reading your books, well except one... the one that got canceled. I actually thought that 'Irredeemable' was just hitting it's stride! But any way you sugar coat it: it's still Ant-Man, so. Everyone knows that Kirkman should be writing Spider-Man or the Incredible Hulk or Wolverine Origins anyway, right?

You're starting to win me over... but really, there's a huge difference between Pagans and Atheists, you should do some research, my friend.

I am getting to know the characters names a bit more now, after over a year of consecutive reading or so. I guess I can understand the whole Gilligan's Island/ Scooby-Doo approach of not using last names, especially with such a large cast; just make sure you use the first names a bit more.

I'll do my best, Andrew.

Had a letter printed in issue №38; you didn't bother to tell me...us...how a zombie is created, just that it's not through biting. Are we ever gonna discover why some people were affected by the zombification, and others not?

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

I don't really remember showing anyone who isn't affected by the zombification. Basically, the rule is: WHATEVER it is that causes the zombies, is something everyone already has. If you stub your toe, get an infection and die... you turn into a zombie. UNLESS your brain is damaged. If someone shoots you in the head and you die... you're dead. A zombie bite kills you because of infection, or blood loss... not because of the zombie "virus." Make sense?

And please (I worry that the next six letters columns will be about religion) don't take the Atheist thing too harshly. I've got nothing against religion, I think it's swell, I just personally don't buy it. I try to display a fair portrayal of it in the book... and I'll probably delve a little deeper into it with coming issues.

Hey Robert Kirkman!
Egads! I've been found!

I would like to take this time to respond to Mr. John W who's letter made print in issue № 37 of TWD, found the zombie on the top of page 2 in TWD №35 a little conspicuous.

Yup. It's me. Charlie was gracious enough to help me with my little campaign to become "a glorified comic book extra". A most awesome moment appearing in a most awesome book. Thanks again.

And Robert, this isn't the first time I've

snuck my way into your books. I'd like to draw your attention to page 2 in Invincible №37. Ah HA! "One please".

Hopefully, plans are I'll be making it into another of your books creating a "Kirkman Trifecta".

I hope all the books I buy get your child through college. Thanks for making comics a great hobby, and Charlie, thanks for making me a part of that hobby.

Sincerely,
Jeff J

Yeah, sure man... that zombie is you. Likely story. You're going to get everyone and their brother emailing Charlie to ask him to draw them in the book—and that's no good. Shame on you Jeff J... SHAME!

Sir,

Please feel free to skip this first bit, it's nothing but the usual: love The Walking Dead, excellent job, first time writing to a comic, keep it up!

I'm only going to say one thing about the continual controversy over the Michonne rape that has really been done to death, and that is that I think it's a positive thing that a comic can generate such discourse. Genuine reader reaction and debate over issues highlighted is always good to see, so I'd take it as a generally positive thing.

I really do. I know I've been complaining a bit about it in the letters column as of late (mostly in jest) but I do think it's great that people care deeply enough to write in, whether it be positive or negative.

Anyhow, on to the real reasons for writing. I've been a huge fan of the series for a while now, however reading Issue 38 I was suddenly struck by two things:

Rick knows that the child isn't his. Now this in itself isn't a huge revelation, but it was that I cared; and I suddenly realized that you've managed to trick me into watching some zombie apocalyptic version of Eastenders (a British soap if it's not know over there, which I hope it isn't). I don't know if that's a good thing or not, but for once I find myself caring about such things in a plot, which is disturbing in itself. I

suppose it does also mean I'd start watching Eastenders too if they worked in a zombie outbreak at some point, but then when wouldn't a film or TV show be drastically improved by the addition of zombies to some extent?

I agree. Sorry to slip in a bit of soap opera... but really, aren't all comics just soap operas for boys. It's all about relationships and human interaction if you look past the explosions, fighting and zombies... just admit it. "Oh, man... I sure do hope Peter and Mary Jane kiss this issue!" We're all girls.

Secondly, a slight grumble, sorry. Towards the end of the issue I found myself thinking "Oh, we're running out of pages, must be a cliffhanger soon. In the supermarket near Woodbury, I know a bunch of Woodbury guys will turn up." Unsurprisingly, over the page the same happens. Obviously I know why you employ such devices at the end of each issue, and I'm sure it makes a lot of sense. I just on occasion find them a little stilted; especially when they are quickly resolved and everything is 'reset' to default afterwards. Regardless, a very minor point on what is by far the best comic book going. It's not as if I expect you to stop doing it. I don't know, I just felt the need to point it out for some reason.

Well the intent is for them to not be stilted and I try not to quickly reset to default afterwards... I'll try to work harder at it. I think the cliffhangers for the last few issues have been a bit of a change of pace... and I hope the one at the end of this issue came as at least a SMALL shock.

Anyway, keep up the excellent work. It is genuinely refreshing to have such an original, thrilling and intelligent work in any medium, but especially comics. Don't ever let the series stop.

Yours Sincerely,
Paul Hunting

I'll do my best to keep it up, as will Mistrs Adlard, Rathburn and Wooton. The best is yet to come!

And with that, I gotta wrap things up. The wife and I gotta watch Sex and the City DVDs. (Research for an upcoming arc.)

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, Letter Hacks, your faithful editor, Amanda, here. We all knew the Governor would be back, and this is one of those moments where you just know everything is going to change for Rick and the group. Luckily, you all won't be waiting too long for the next issue. We'll be back in two weeks answering some new letters!

While you wait though, if you're looking to fill the WALKING DEAD hole in your heart, please consider picking up our debut Skybound Comet title, CLEMENTINE – in stores right now! Written and illustrated by the wonderful Tillie Walden, with grey tones from original series regular Cliff Rathburn, this graphic novel follows Clem, one of our favorite TWD characters, on surviving her next journey in a world still full of walkers. Thanks for checking it out!

And this issue closes out our fantastic run of connecting variant covers from Stephen Platt and Dave McCaig, as well! I think Stephen may have been saving the best for last, he left us with an iconic final image. Paolo Rivera is leading the charge on our next connecting variant set, and you won't want to miss these.

For now, enjoy some of these classic Letter Hacks.

Kirkman,

I felt really bad for Rick. He should be able to bask in the joy of his new baby girl, but he has to saw off Dale's foot.

I thought this issue was going to be lighter in tone due to the baby's arrival, but this is one dark tale.

1. It looked like Dale was jealous over Andrea and Tyreese's interaction. Am I wrong?

You were right—and this has been pretty much resolved already.

2. When are you going to flesh out Axel's character? You follow me?

Soon, unless he dies.

On page 19 at the top, Tyreese has his shirt off, then in the last panel he has his shirt on. On page 20 Tyreese doesn't have his shirt on anymore. Is he really that indecisive on a hot day?

Yes, Charlie Adlard knows Tyreese inside and out, he knows what makes him tick... he knows when he wears a shirt and when he doesn't. Sometimes the change is quite sudden but that's just how Tyreese is.

Your upcoming issues' teaser "No One Is Safe" has me scared for Rick. This means that you're doing your job.

Sophea Uk

Thanks, lady... I'm trying.

I was surprised that there was no expansion of the fact that Billy just ran and left Dale being chewed on by the zombie. Dale was unconscious when Billy ran, but he must have remembered he was out there with the guy and wondered why he had to crawl away from the zombie himself and why wasn't Billy helping him or looking for him.

Drew Peabody.

Billy ran out of fear—it all happened quickly. Dale doesn't hold it against him. Dale looks at Billy as a child, making a child's mistake.

First things first, I love this comic series! I really do! You're doing it in a very different way from the other zombie tales out there—you're allowing the story to be the main focal point, not the undead. And that takes guts. And that's also what makes you different—and in my opinion, better—from the rest!

It's easy to hack and slash (and that's important to have in a horror comic, uh, I

mean, “Survivalist Adventure” ---btw, love the term!) but when you make the zombies the thing that drives the comic it gets old fast. But, I’m sure you know this, and that’s why you haven’t lost readership! I wish you guys all the success in the world and gratefully look forward to collecting the rest of this series for many years to come. It’s an amazing comic!

That said, two things about this comic grate on me. (Hey, its constructive criticism... HA HA HA!) First, I’ve noticed that from time to time you’ve “recycled” images. You’ll use the same drawing more than once on the page (sometimes with minor changes, like a smile added, or you’ll put a hand on a shoulder for comfort, or something like that. Sometimes, there will be no change at all.) And it sucks. It’s lazy. You shouldn’t do it. This comic kicks too much ass, to take such stupid liberties like that.

For example:

Issue №40, page 17, you use the same image twice, but with just the tiniest smile added.

Issue 37, pg 8 uses the exact same drawing twice.

Issue 6, page 10, you use the exact same image 3 times.

And again... Issue №33, page 5 you use the same image of Michonne ---3 TIMES!!

I get it that the character looks like the character, and all that, and sometimes you are trying to convey a certain mood or something, but don’t be lazy. It’s a real turn off when reading a comic. And people DO notice it. (I was chatting with some other WD fans online the other week and that was a common beef that a lot of people shared.)

What you’re referring to is commonly known as a “photo stat” or “stat” and we’ve done it just a smidge more often than the FOUR times you’ve noticed in FORTY issues. It’s a tool like any other, used to convey LACK of movement or change in a medium where there is NO MOVEMENT and it’s not something I’ll be stopping any time soon. They are scenes that are written into the book as part of the story... not to save time, but to convey a certain action, or mood, or whatever. If Charlie were to draw the scene twice, aside from being frankly, unnecessary, it would also ruin the moment, because there would be a change. Any time you’ve seen anyone frozen in a moment of a

movie or television show, stunned, scared or otherwise and they just stay there, caught in the moment... that would be a stat in a comic.

Besides... novelists use the same words over and over and over in books. Why can’t they just use new words? I’m right there with you, really... but those guys are just trying to cut corners.

Second, why are the guys and gals wasting ammo on tin cans for practice, when they could be sniping the zombies standing on the other side of the fence? The SPLAT of a zombie’s skull exploding is much more interesting than the PTING of a tin can falling over. I mean, why not thin the herd if you’re just wasting ammo? Just a friendly suggestion. (That said, why aren’t they doing shifts in the guard towers? I mean if, they know Woodbury is a threat, common sense says put sentries on duty to watch for the possibly invasion.)

Well, they must have thought the fences were their first line of defense, no need for sentries. And on the can thing, a can is a smaller, more narrow target, and would train people a little better. Later, they do go out to kill moving targets but shooting cans was a viable step toward that.

Anyway, like I said, I adore this comic and hope it has a run for MANY, MANY YEARS!!! Just thought you might want to know what one of your biggest fans is thinking. Take care and keep it interesting!

-Clay in Canada

In closing, stats are the coolest, my friend. I get a lot of pleasure spotting them in various books (they’re in virtually every comic) and noting the complexity of some. It adds an extra level to the reading experience. I hope you see things my way from now on, Clay.

I would like to start out by telling you how much I enjoy your book. The other day I told a guy on line to pick up TWD instead of that Marvel Zombies garbage and explained how much better your comic was. I put TWD dead right up there with Strangers in Paradise and Powers in how you pace the story (even when nothing “happens” there are still significant events) and keep all the participants relevant. After all that high praise I feel like a dumb ass for a few minor issues(complaints), but here

goes. Where are they geographically? I know they started out in Atlanta but other than Tyreese, his daughter, Michonne, the convicts at the prison, some residents of woodbury, and the father and son in the first two issues where are the black people(You did know Atlanta was the new chocolate city?)? You don't even show that many black zombies. As a person of color I struggle with buying books that under represent us we have been a major part of this nation since its formation and have helped shape it in every way. That leads me to my last issue (Don't get me wrong your book is still great) you seem to be feeding the stereotype of the black males infatuation with white women (maybe unintentionally). With his relationship with Michonne stalled will Tyreese now pursue Andrea? The final panels seemed to move toward that idea. I also don't want you to think I'm a youngster talking out off his ass (I'm 40) these are issues I have dealt with and talk to my 16 yr old son, and nephews about all the time. Thanks for another great issue and keep up the good work. P.S. Please do not let Marvel talk you into any type of cross over. Don't Sell Out.

Christopher Crayton

What do you have against white women, Christopher? Anyway, as you can see by now, Tyreese is still very much with Michonne and he and Andrea are only friends... so no stereotype being fed here. Now, they are still in Georgia, but yeah... I guess we don't have enough black people. Sorry about that. I'll try to work some more in. Now, most of the residents in that area did go into the city of Atlanta and get turned into MORE zombies when the plague started... so our characters aren't exactly from the area, so I've got that to use in my defense.

Also... there are a lot of black characters in this book compared to most other comics... but I don't think that's a good sign for my book as much as it's just a bad sign for other books. Anyway, more black characters... request noted and logged.

Hello Robert,

Issue №40 was a great read as usual. Things are looking to be shaken up real soon and I'm really looking forward to it!

In the letter's page of that issue, a few

people had questions about how long in advance you have plotted the book. I also have a question about it. This might have been asked in a previous issue, so I apologize if I'm being redundant.

You said that the book is plotted a long ways out... do you ever find yourself straying a bit from your plans but then eventually coming back on track? As an example, I remember reading that Jeff Smith had also plotted Bone in advance, but felt there were some things that needed to be addressed as he was going.

One example was the Great Cow Race. He had no intention of showing it, until he realized he really should. Are there any instances like that in Walking Dead?

Yes, a few, but I can't mention some because they haven't happened yet. Dexter and Andrew were originally just going to leave the prison--and not try to kick everyone out. But when I was writing issue 18, I figured "these guys wouldn't just leave." So I had to change the ending. Originally, Hershel was going to lose a leg, not Allen, but I decided so much bad stuff had happened to Hershel already with losing his kids and all, having him then also lose a leg would seem unrealistic... like I had it out for the guy... so Allen's leg was lost. I also wasn't planning on killing Allen, I loved Allen, until the issue he died in was being written. It just seemed like it needed the extra punch of him dying... and so he died. Seemed like a good idea at the time.

Also, when is freakin' www.kirkmania.com be live?!?!?

I'm tired of asking!!
Roch Vaillancourt

Soon... it's actually being worked on. I think SOMETHING will be live before the end of October for sure.

Wow. I just finished Number №40! Awesome work. I enjoyed the story very much. It was a nice change of pace from the usual Boy meets zombie, Zombie bites boy storyline. I am really glad Dale is doing well and survived the bite. I like Dale and I hope the "old geezer" sticks around for a long while. I hope the Andrea sticks with him for the long haul. Looks like she is getting a bit friendly with that young whippersnapper, Tyreese. It is just nice to see the characters

have some happy times for a change.

Your writing has drawn me into the characters and their lives. I actually care about what happens to them. And that, K-man, is the mark of a great writer. Your characters are rich and full of life. I look forward to watching their lives evolve over the next 460 issues. I know at some point others will come into the scene while others move on and I know they will all draw me in to their story.

And I just feel deep in my heart that you are going to have that crazy Governor show his ugly face again. He is going to be one screwed up looking dude for sure.

Look at you, all seeing the future and stuff.

Thanks for such a wonderful story line.

And thanks for having Rick shave. Man, he was kind of skuzzy looking, dude. Lol.

Thank Charlie... he got sick of drawing facial hair.

Hey, would it be too much for a prosthetic Dr. to show up at the prison so Dale can have a false leg? Or better yet, one of those pirate peg legs. How cool would that be?

Again with the future seeing... I'm impressed.

I just looked at the CSMoore website. Says my Rick Grimes fighting a zombie statue won't ship until around November. That's sad. I was really looking forward to getting it this coming month. Oh, well. I'll be patient.

I understand there was a problem with the factory in China, but it's been resolved now... so it'll be in your hot little hands soon enough.

Keeping on creating your worlds, Robert. You do good work.

Now, if we can just get some solar powered video consoles at the prison for Carl..... I guess that is too much though.

Take care.

Michael Heffron

"I sit in awe of the K-man and his worlds which he creates"

Thanks for writing Michael, and for the kind, flattering words.

Lord of Comics Kirkman,

First off i love your comic. No other in the entire world matches yours or-in my opinion-ever will. After that usual kissing up on to other things.

What are you doing with Dale? Damn you he can't die! Those poor kids have been through enough without another "father" dying. Or maybe since as told earlier it's not the actual bite that kills you and they have a doctor now... maybe she'll just clean the wound of bacteria and he'll survive! Right? Right?

For now at least...

Nice going on the similarities between the Governor and Rick. Makes the story a nice warning for him. You know, if he's not careful or if his family dies he could end up like that...

I have to say i've enjoyed Glenn and Maggie's storyline more than any other in the book. if you kill one of them so help me i'll...i'll drop the book okay that's a lie i'd stay even if you killed everyone and just had zombies and aliens wandering around.

That's good to know...

One question, why does Axel say "you follow me?" after almost everything he says? I'm not complaining i actually like it. I was just reading some back issues and noticed he says that a lot. On that note I love Axel, he should have some more page time but I'm sure you get that request a lot for all the characters...on second thought just keep doing what you're doing, don't change a thing.

That's just a little personality tick to give him a unique voice. He's like one of those guys who ends every sentence with "man." Or something like that.

I have to say after reading some of the letters pages i have to ask why can't people tell the difference between the characters? It's not that hard. I think it's quite obvious if you actually pay attention to the book your reading.

Look! I'm not commenting on Michonne's rape! shock! gasp!

You blew it.

Anyhoo, thanks for listening to my ramblings and keep up the good work!

Jessica R.

P.S. I'm a girl. so I'll get printed right? please? pretty please with a cherry on top? you can even edit out that part about allen if i am spoiling it or something...

I can't come out and say I print every letter from a girl... or else people will just start saying they're female to get printed... and we can't have that. I get enough people acting like ladies on the internet. I don't need it in my letters columns to.

Hey, Kirkman... Still loving the book! A little slow this time, but pacing is necessary now and then... I was surprised to see Dale survive the zombie bite after how Allen died. Great job throwing us off the trail there. But I know how you hate hearing the same boring crap about how great you are, so I'll get on to some questions about the letters (see, some people really do read them!)...

1. I'm really curious about this one. Why do you think washed out color would work so well in a movie when you are so dedicated to keeping the book black and white? I'm not saying either is a bad idea, I'm just curious as to why you think the coloring should change in a different medium.

I doubt anyone would want to make a black and white movie. It's not often done and the only time, in recent memory, it's been successful is Schindler's List. I don't think you'll EVER see a straight black and white TV show. I also think washed out color just looks cool.

2. Did you print Valeria's letter get printed twice on purpose? It was a great letter and probably worthy of a second printing, especially since many people may have missed it in the previous and much longer lettercol... Just wondering if it was intentional or not.

I think I printed it first, out of the order it came in to make sure it got printed... then accidentally forgot and printed it again because I'm a moron. I do these things late at night...

never quiz me on letter column stuff... I'm usually in a sleep deprived stupor.

3. Not a question, but I thought it was interesting that I got into comics much the same way you did... I was a big baseball card collector as a kid. One day, my friends dragged me to a new store that had opened that sold cards and comics. I had read comics on and off before, but after a couple trips to the store, I started picking up more comics... I still go to the same store every week, but I can't remember the last time I bought a baseball card...

I honestly don't know why I was collecting baseball cards... I didn't know who anyone was and I never really watched baseball. Comics were a much better fit. I'm happier... aren't you?

Finally, bring back the Rathburn back covers! I miss them! The poster looks great, but I still want to see some more of Cliff's artwork!

Cliff is busy working on the new BRIT series- he's penciling, inking and coloring it. So no time for back covers!

I didn't get issue 41 before issue 40... Your time machine must be broken.

Breaking promises again... YOU STINK!

Jim Amato

You're right... I do stink. I'll go take a shower now.

See you all again soon,

-Robert Kirkman.



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, Letter Hacks, Amanda here. Another six issues down, which means we're at the start of a new story arc and answering some new letters! It also means that we're starting a new run of connecting variant covers, and Paolo Rivera is about to BLOW YOUR SOCKS OFF with these! An absolutely stunning connecting piece, so track them down. I'm telling you, you're going to want to! And if you haven't caught it yet, CLEMENTINE by Tillie Walden, our first Skybound Comet graphic novel, is out in stores now. Yes, I am plugging Clem twice in Letter Hacks this month, but it's just that good. Deal with it.

Let's make it THREE TIMES! Pick up CLEMENTINE Volume 1 by Tillie Walden! It's solid gold!

Now let's get some new letters.

Did Shane take advantage of Lori when they had sex?

I liked how in the cutting room floor of issue No37 you mentioned that you've always wondered why fans were so harsh on Lori for her infidelity.. and I've always thought the same.

As a reader, my perspective of the Lori/Shane dynamic was that he took advantage of her in a very emotionally vulnerable state that Lori was in, with consent perhaps being a little bit grey.

In the context of the story, with the state of mind Lori must have been in, and Shane's determination to covet Rick's wife (I think that's a cardinal sin or something, somebody better ask Hershel). I think Lori was taken advantage of in this moment. While she did sort of consent by saying "I need you" to Shane.. that's a bit of a grey area, she didn't explicitly say "yes".

She also wasn't sure if Rick was alive, was realizing her parents were dead and the world was ending. Shane took on a protector role, he was her only support system in that moment.

The panels from prior flashbacks of them doing the deed, where Lori's hand starts out grasping Shane's but then she unlocks her fingers from his has always conveyed an emotional and physical disconnect in that moment. As if she wasn't all there, or perhaps regretted the decision while they were in the processes of having intimate physical relations.

Also... Power dynamics? Shane was a cop, and would always be viewed as authority by lay people. Especially in his protector role that he assumed over Lori and Carl. Could this have contributed to Lori feeling obligated to accept his sexual advances?

What's your take on this Mr. Kirkman? Did Lori fully and enthusiastically consent to having sex with Shane, was she in the right state of mind to make that decision?

I feel the fans have never really thought critically in this moment and really understood the dynamics at play between Shane and Lori and whether or not consent was concrete in this moment.

Insert obligatory "loving this series!" here... it's true, seeing everyone in colour is super cool!!

Regards,

Cayden S
Ontario, Canada

In my mind, it definitely wasn't a consent issue. Lori was distraught but still of sound mind. And I don't think she saw Shane as an authority figure in any way. Cop, yes, sure, but he was a longtime family friend. I don't even think of what Shane did as being sinister. He was upset too, he thought Rick was dead as well. She lost a husband, he lost a friend, and in their grief they found each other. The point for me is that they found themselves in a situation no one living today has ever experienced... it was the literal end of civilization. Death was all around them and they felt like they could die at any minute... they were essentially on a crashing plane and decided: before we hit the ground... let's... y'know.

So, Shane was good. He did want to protect Lori and Carl and risked his life to do so. If Rick had died, or never made it to them, maybe they would have lived happily ever after. It's the thought of that... that eventually drove Shane MAD and led to what he did. The apocalypse corrupted him.

Robert,

Reading in your Deluxe notes about being obsessed with sales I can relate. In the first 20 or so issues I remember checking the online Diamond sales charts for each issue. I had finally

found a comic I really liked and I was scared the sales would decline and the book would be cancelled.

After those first 20 issues the sales looked stable and maybe even grew a bit each issue. Then I was keeping an eye on the publishing schedule. It seems like once a comic gets too far off schedule it would be shedding readers. That never really happened though and sales just kept growing.

By the time the comic was in the 40s or so I would think, "can this comic crack the top ten?" and it took a bit but it did and I think it hit number 1 with issue 100 if I recall correctly. The comic book was a mainstay. It felt like a victory for the folks that support the non-super hero books.

I'm glad you are re-doing the series in color so I can relive this one more time. Although I do wish Axel would live this time around. You follow me?

Brandon Borzelli
Lebanon, NJ

I follow you.

How cool would it be if Charlie and I had the time to come back and change some of the issues here and there. Wouldn't that be a fun surprise (we're not doing that, sorry).

And that's all she wrote on our new letters this time around, but we'll be back in another six issues to answer some more. Until then, keep writing in—and enjoy some of these classic Hacks below.

-Amanda LaFranco

Thanks for reading! Or really, re-reading! I really do appreciate it. Talk soon!

-Robert Kirkman

Well, here we are with issue 43.

Yeah, this is the flashback issue. I'm thinking I might get some complaints for this issue (and I'm prepared, fuckers! Bring it on!) but there is some very important stuff being touched on in the issue, stuff that will be used later in the series, that is important to show.

I chose to do this issue this way, instead of telling the governor's story along the way as a subplot in the previous issues because that would pretty much kill any impact his attack on the prison would have.

I think it worked out, but I do understand that two issues in a row have ended at the exact same moment and that makes it seem like there's been no progression this issue... well, I promise it will be

worth it in the long run.

Also, before anyone complains about the reused pages... this issue has the exact same amount of new pages as any other issue has. The reused pages are EXTRA. This issue is longer than usual issues.

Now—enough of that. Let's get some mail answered.

Robert,

Issue 41 was kinda a let down man, don't get me wrong it was great having issue 41 only a week after issue 40, I just thought it was kind of a weak issue.

My first complaint is about Alice, how stupid do you have to be to want to study the zombies; I mean come on, what a stupid idea, Rick should have killed that thing the minute she brought it into the prison, what do you really need to know about them "destroy brain = dead zombie" and is a prison hospital really set up to run test and shit like that? It's not like they have a laboratory in the prison, I really hope she dies soon, she is getting on my nerves.

There's any number of things she could have done to that zombie with equipment from any medical center that would have taught her something more about zombies. She has a scientific mind... she's very smart, and she wanted to learn more about the enemy.

Second I think you killed off Carol just a little too soon, she was just starting to get interesting. I would have loved to see some drama between her and Hershel "Sleep with my boy and you will burn in Hades, slut!" type of shit happening, and it would have been kinda funny to see her only talking to that zombie, spending all her time out there reading it stories and brushing its hair.

Nah... it was time for her to die.

Don't get me wrong I not saying that I'm going to stop reading it or anything, I was just a little let down. All in all though, it just makes all the other issues that much better. Anyhow I do have a few questions I'm hoping you would take the time to answer:

1) Will we ever see Dexter's buddy Andrew again?

Probably not. But you never know.

2) Any chance of having the group venture into a city again? I know it would be hard to find a reason to go, but it would be cool to see one again.

Eventually, I'm sure.

3) I saw a picture of cover 41 online a while before it came out, and the background looked blue, when I picked up my issue it was purple, did Adlard change it, or were there 2 different covers? (it's probably my favorite cover yet)

It might just be your monitor. It's always been purple. Computers do that sometimes.

Thank you for a great series
Erik Porter

Thanks for ripping my heart out and stomping on it about issue 41... you jerk!

Kirkman,

WOW. I don't even know what to say. It was crazy enough to see 2 issues of Walking Dead in my comic shop, a mere week apart from each other...but that ending in №41...WOW. Billy was practically raped by Carol, and then her new best friend gave her a nasty hickey. Guess Lori's going to have to deliver on her promise now then, eh?

Other than the insane events with Carol, these two issues were pretty quiet. Lots of subtle things though. That's what I really dig about this series. There doesn't have to be any action at all, because the character interactions are so strong. An entire issue of Rick and Tyreese playing poker would probably be just as good as any other issue.

I cannot wait for the upcoming "no one is safe" arc, and the impending battle with the Woodbury jerks. Kinda worried about who's going to die next, but that's half of the fun in reading Walking Dead. You just never know. I'm also stoked about what's going on in Invincible (especially in №50...that cover has me counting down the weeks!). Wolf-Man's great too, but the bimonthly schedule is killing me. While I'm ranting and raving about your books, I gotta add that I'm going to really miss Ant-Man. Apparently he's going to appear in other series, but that's just not the same.

He's in good hands with Dan Slott over in Avengers: The Initiative. You'll like what he's doing.

A lot of people ask you what your favorite zombie movies are, so I'm going to ask something that I haven't seen asked in the letters pages (though i'm sure it has been...). What are some of your favorite bands and/or genres of music?

I guess that's everything for now. Keep on doing what you're doing, man!

-Dan O'Neill

I think I answered this before. Some favorites just

off the top of my head? Nick Cave, Neil Young, David Bowie, Bog Segar, The White Stripes, Holly Golightly, The Presidents of the United States of America, The Strokes, AC/DC, Aimee Mann, Tool, The Beatles... I'm sure there are others.

Mr. Kirkman,

Why the hell would Rick wear his gun holster on his right hip? It's not like his stub is going to be winning any high noon duels...

I'll talk to Charlie about it. I'm not sure he could just reverse it, and it's not like he could buy a new one. I'm not an expert on holsters.

Thanks for killing Carol. Is it some sort of foreshadowing that the Zombie that killed her looks an awful lot like Lori? Poor Rick, if Lori dies his nipples are going to be SORE.

??

I'm really enjoying the book lately. It's great to see a shake-up coming up though, the survivors have spent enough time in that prison. Time to pack up the RV and head out to California.

Kudos!
-Zach L.

Sunshine!

And with that, I bring things to a close. I think this issue is shipping about five weeks after 42, so we slipped a week, but we'll try and make that up on 44. Things are moving along nicely, right? RIGHT?!

See you all again very soon,

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, Letter Hacks, your faithful editor Amanda here! As Robert will mention below, this is the start of some new territory for THE WALKING DEAD. No one was safe before, but that's doubly accurate after this next batch of issues. If you're reading for the first time – you've been warned; and if you're re-reading the series – I'm sorry that you'll be reliving this emotional stress (but also, it's kind of your own choosing). While you anxiously await to find out if Rick survives, enjoy some classic Hacks from back in the day.

Here we are at issue 44. This one kicks off the whole "NO ONE IS SAFE" arc of the book that'll be bringing us through issue 48. Big stuff is planned. The book will be drastically different here in a few months, you watch.

That's about all I want to say on the matter, other than get ready for the shit to hit the fan (much more than it already has).

Now let's answer some mail!

Yeah, I guess you probably do get tired of email after email telling you how great you are. It sure seems like a real love fest between you and your fans. I can't even get my Mother to say nice things about me.

I really don't... please--keep it coming.

If it makes you feel better, I don't think you're so hot. I mean, you're ok and all. I do dig The Walking Dead and a few of your other books on a monthly basis. Battle Pope was really a swell idea. Anyway, the point of my letter is to let you know that The Walking Dead has really been dragging as of late. Nothing has really been going on much at all. Something needs to happen. I don't think I can take another issue of the gang just hanging out and looking cool. I mean, send them out exploring or something. Let them find a new town or a new group of people. The last 3 or 4 issues have been pretty much just a big bundle of fluff. Your stories always seem to move a little slower than most comics, but enough is enough. I love the book, but it needs to start moving forward.

Thanks for your time,
Jeffrey Gibson

Well, things ARE picking up, I hope, starting this

issue. That said, I don't think this book moves slower than most comics just because a super-villain isn't busting through a wall every eight pages. While it might be lacking in action, this is a book about normal characters and I think the things that have been happening in the book have been important to the overall arc of the characters. That said, like I said before--things are picking up now.

Hello.

I've come to interrupt your regularly broadcasted sausage-fest to NOT talk about Michonne's rape, racism, and how apparently being an atheist is wrong in a comic book about lost morals and dead people eating living people. I mean, seriously boys, stop whining! I want to first thank you for finally having Carol snap. While I have come to care about these characters probably a little bit more than is considered healthy, Carol needed to go. She was a loose cannon and nobody else was making any moves toward complete insanity, so kudos. Though I hardly need to congratulate you on writing awesome story arcs, it seems to be one of the things you do best. I can't really describe what it's like, as a fan of your work, to be waiting in agony to see if a two dimensional apparition delivers a healthy baby, or survives a non-existent bite to the leg. I'm sure my boyfriend would be afraid for my own mental health if he wasn't also completely roped in.

I am currently an illustration major who's trying to focus in sequential art and that who-ha, and while I'm not sure if I'll end up writing comics, storyboards, being a world renowned chef or joining the circus, it's nice to have something to look at that gives me an air of confidence. I don't get a lot of support for my own work at home, while my skill is not in question, I think I just scare my parents with the idea that I like drawing flesh eating zombies and silly, but often vulgar pictures. I'm not twisted, I don't wear raccoon eye makeup and feign despair, I'm a happy chick, I just have a flare for the demented. Have you encountered this problem, or is it a lost daddy's little girl thing only? I don't expect you to hold the answer as if you're Yoda himself, but hell, you'd have a better perspective than me at this point. I usually hate writing letters like this, essentially a fan letter, but from your responses to other letters, you seem like a stand up guy.

Yeah, I'm totally awesome. And also yeah, I think it's a girl thing.

I guess the only other thing I wanted to say was I felt an air of Day of the Dead in issue 41, and that rules. Whether it was intended or not, it certainly wasn't cheesy, as your work is consistently tasteful (given the genre). You're going places, mister! The best of luck to you!

Erin Leary

Well, Day is my favorite Romero movie--and zombie movie, so yeah... can't really help it if some things seep in. It wasn't intentional.

P.S. If you haven't seen Hot Fuzz, you should.

Seen it, loved it, bought the DVD and will soon buy the bigger more expensive DVD for the extras because I am a sucker.

Just read issue 41, NICE. Ever since I finished the issue, I've been thinking about the way the story unfolded. I finally decided to just go ahead and send in my question. As I witnessed Carol's, in essence, downward spiral I immediately thought she was going to kill herself. When I finished the issue, I initially thought you had tipped your hand too much and almost gave away the fact that she was finally going all the way off the deep end. The foreshadowing of her settling up with Lori, arranging for her daughter's care, and her last fuck all seemed to eagerly point to her preparing to die. As I reflected more though (My mind tends to wander at work) I recalled that I was still very tense as I saw her walking towards the captured zombie, and still shocked as she let the zombie bite her. The method was enough of a jolt to shake me from the comfort of knowing her death was coming.

Now I'm stuck in kind of a rut wondering if you had intended to lead us along realizing what she was planning to do; still being shocked and disgusted by the irrationality and bizarreness of the manner in which she chooses to commit suicide. On the other hand, as I mentioned before, it just might have been an instance of over-foreshadowing, intending us to merely feel that something just wasn't right (of course you'll probably never admit to it :D). I'd be interested in understanding the process you were going through writing this series of events.

Regardless, this book is my favorite of the books I'm currently reading. It's one of the only things keeping me interested in an industry I feel has become stagnant with never ending, unevolving, cliched super hero books.

So, until the "Zombie Season" on LOST, or Rick and the gang become stranded on a mystical island, keep up the awesome work,

John

Well, I wasn't so much trying to telegraph that she

was about to commit suicide as much as I was just showing her tying up the loose ends... I wanted people to see that something was not quite right with her (as it has been for some time) and I was actually trying to give a bit of a sense, with her talk with Lori, that things were getting back to normal between them (or close to it). If you did see it coming, I'm glad the method, at the very least, was a bit of a shock.

Dear Mr "took my writing a letter to a comic virginity and never printed it" Kirkman,

You bastard. God damn you. Why did you have to go and say that you listen to the Dirty Three. Truly one of the best bands on the planet. Now I cannot stay angry at you as you obviously have got great tastes and also I suppose because your writing is just so bloody good.

Just came back from holidays and after picking up my standing order was nicely surprised to have issues No39 to No41 sitting there waiting for me to read. And boy they didn't disappoint.

In issue No40 where Rick turns back to Lori after just hacking Dales foot and goes "this world, this fucking world" and Lori still centered on the baby just looks at him and then looking happy says "think we should name her Judith" was absolutely brilliant.

Such warmth and humour after such a brutal scene was pure gold.

I see Rick is still on a bit of a power trip. Takes over from Alice (basically pushing her out of the way) and hacks Dales foot off and then in No41 decides he will kill the groups "pet zombie" His, I know what is best for everyone and I will do it attitude is starting to remind me of Shane. I still love the guy and know he's been through a lot and has every one's best interests at heart but hey they made a committee and he isn't and doesn't have to be the leader and solely responsible for everything. Maybe running on testosterone and stupidity as he says. Maybe the new baby will chill him out a bit.

I think Dale is tripping that Andrea is looking to move on. Sure she said some things when he came to but not seriously. But you never know with you Kirkman, you sly devil. Let's hope that Tyreese can keep it in his pants if she makes a play.

A couple of letters (in issue No39 and No41) asked about using names more. You explained, quite logically, in No39 that would not be natural every time one person talked to another that they say their name. Excluding the now 5 young kids, there's only 13 (I think) main characters, 12 after that lovely ending to poor deluded Carol. Charlie's facial details of the characters is so much better than it used to be and after 4 years of reading I find it surprising that you

would need a name supplied as to know who the character is. But I only collect TWD and 2 other comics (Usagi and The Goon) so maybe if you get a lot more comics every month it is harder. Don't know but just wanted to add my piece and ask not to be too over flooded with names.

I'm with you, but I will be trying to drop names in where it is natural... maybe a bit more often than before. \ Hopefully it won't be too noticeable.

Any special plans when issue №50 done? The missus cooking you your favourite meal, taking you out for a bit of a pub crawl or anything like that?

Just writing issue 51 and keeping the run going.

Congrats on the new addition to the Kirkman clan and for breaking into the top 100 and thank you and all the team for such an enjoyable read every month. Hoping to see this in print.

A fan for life
Joel Boyes

New addition? My son is a year and a half old now! Thanks though... but he'd be offended by being called "new."

Even if you don't print this please respond.

I just got the mailer today with WD issue №40. Love it. But I also received the Ultimate Spider-man 100 Project.

It was a great compilation of artwork that did include some of Arthur's work from Marvel zombies. I was a bit disappointed because I didn't see any of Charlie's work in there and to top it off there were several covers by the same artists. A few of them looked rushed as well. I have only come to one conclusion. You bastard... you worked poor Charlie to death and he wasn't able to participate with this fantastic project by the hero initiative. I hope you sleep well on your pile of money. I'm bipolar so that being said, keep cranking them out ASAP. We can't get enough.

Later Cap'n Rob.
Chris Deluna

I think it's as simple as Charlie just wasn't asked. Charlie's always doing side projects here and there and always asking me for more script--so trust me, I'm not working him too hard.

Dear Kirkman,

This is the first letter I ever wrote to a comic book letter page, But for this series I think it's about time I do, Walking Dead is the best comic book I read in a long time it's like watching a

good tv drama you always want to know what will happen next. I also enjoy Invincible it would be cool if you do a Invincible and walking dead crossover just for the hell of it but that's up to you.

Sincerely,
Mason Miller

A crossover? I'm sorry--but there will NEVER be a crossover between THE WALKING DEAD--and a superhero book.

That is a very true statement, that the Roamers are slow as all hell, but when you are thinking they are not a threat, then you're deader than a door nail. Well, it wasn't put exactly that way in your story, but these survivors need to always be aware of their surroundings.

Great advice to watch the zombies patterns and how they move about. This is good leadership advice. I was completely shocked at Carol, she is truly crazy as all hell to confront that zombie. The bite out of her neck, left me gagging.

Paul Dale Roberts

Good... gagging is good. Glad to see I got a reaction from you.

Robert,

First off I just want to say congratulations for releasing consecutive issues of The Walking Dead in a two week span! When I saw Diamond had listed №41 for the following week after №40 was just released I believed it had to be a mistake and would be corrected the following Monday. But surprise, surprise, come Wednesday №41 was pulled for me. Hopefully a steady monthly schedule isn't too far behind because, recently, my interest has waned in standard super hero fare and my pull-list has taken a hit as a result. I've only been reading comics for a few years and mature, character driven titles such as The Walking Dead, along with any comic written by Ed Brubaker, are all that are left to maintain my interest in the hobby.

So after №41's astonishing ending, where does The Walking Dead go from here? A lot of the loose ends have been tied up in the last two issues with only one noticeable new one being created. Glen and Maggie got married, Lori's baby was born apparently healthy, Dale survived the zombie bite, and Carol finally...

Aside, the looming attack by the residents of Woodbury and Dale's fear of losing Andrea, any hints as to where were heading next?

That looming attack was a big one...

I can't remember the last issue it was in but the character profile pages have been missing for quite some time! You said you removed them so they can be updated... Are they ever coming back?

They're very time consuming to put together and there's a bunch of new characters to list and I haven't had time. Eventually... I hope... but for now I just don't have time.

Don't disappoint me and end The Walking Dead anytime soon! I'm looking forward to a second omnibus shortly after the release of issue №48 and countless others after that. Also, there is only one way to do The Walking Dead series justice if it was ever to be made into a movie or television series; An HBO ongoing series! If done right that would be absolutely astounding.

Keep up the amazing work,
Mike Somma

I don't plan on ending this book any time remotely soon. So don't worry. The second Omnibus will be released with summer 2008 or before Christmas 2008, it'll have 25-48. I'm still deciding on when it will be out—but it will be out.

Hello again, Kirkman. Another week, another TWD... Let's keep this pace up, okay?? I need more zombie goodness every week! Seriously though, thanks for pointing out that you're only 5 issues behind after 4 years.

That's really not bad nowadays. I wouldn't even notice if you didn't mention it in the lettercol just about every month... ;-)

Well, I don't mention it as much as letter writers mention it. I'm not going to apologize for it anymore, I think we've shipped more issues in our time than any other independent book in recent memory. 7 TPB volumes in 4 years is pretty damn good, I think.

Another fine issue here. Carol is one messed up broad! I don't think I ever realized quite how deranged she really is... I didn't expect her to try to off herself again so soon, although I did think you telegraphed it a few pages earlier when she asked Lori if she'd take care of Sophia. I can't believe Lori let her just walk away at that point... How could she not know something like this was coming? It doesn't look like there's any hope of saving her now, but I thought that with Dale too... I'm interested to see if you find a plausible way of saving Carol now.

Keep in mind this isn't normal every day life we're talking about. Every one of these characters expect to die at some point—the odds are against them.

It's not odd at all for Carol to ask Lori to take care of Sophia if she dies. People are dropping like flies

around them. I don't think Lori would give it a second thought.

Sorry to hear about Ant-Man being cancelled... I didn't even know it was ending until I read it in your letters page... That was a fun book. Sorry to see it go so soon...

Eh... before it's time, maybe? Who knows. Books come and go. If none of my series had ever ended I'd be writing fifty books right now or never would have been able to start something new (or I would have had to—gasp—quit a book).

I'm glad to see you're finally putting your racial arguments to rest in the letters page and moving on to your extreme hatred of religion instead.

HAH!

Progress at its finest! Maybe the name of Letter Hacks should be changed to Kirkman's Political Forum. :-) I agree with your view though. Organized religion is all well and good, but none for me, thanks.

So, issue 50 is going to be a major turning point, eh? Is this when the aliens finally come to wipe out the zombie menace? I've been looking forward to that for far too long...

No aliens in 50... maybe issue 75.

Out of curiosity, how far in advance does Charlie draw the covers for TWD?

Well, he drew the covers for 44-48 before he started issue 43... so a bit.

I noticed that Rick still has his stubble on this cover and on the cover for issue 42. Doesn't Charlie know he's drawing a clean-shaven Rick on the interiors?!? And speaking of Charlie, that reminds me - I have to go tell him to make me a zombie just like he did Jeff J!

Jim Amato

Well, the cover to 42 was drawn well in advance of the issue, usually 4 or maybe even 5 months before the issue is started. So they'll rarely be completely accurate. The job of a cover is to sell the book, though... not show you exactly what's inside, per se. Hell, half the time I use the covers to deliberately LIE to readers so they won't see what's coming. I mean, you wouldn't want a surprise given away on the cover—would you?

I don't care if this makes it to letter hacks or not but I demand vindication!

I recently purchased a handful of THE WALKING DEAD and it's the best goddamn comic I've read in ages... kudos! However, upon closer inspection of issue 27 April 2006, the first

8 pages are friggin repeated so in reality I have 16 pages of the same story with absolutely no closure and to top it off I have 6 repeated pages of letter hacks! (that could be 6 more pages of this awesome storyline but what can ya do) maybe this is the rare find of the century, either way it does me no good its a crucial part of the story and I have no closure, I need closure. I will gladly send it back for a new copy or perhaps a nice TPB :)

I believe the reader/writer relationship has been breached due to a faulty product and I expect at least confirmation that u have read and thought about my grievance.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration

If you send your copy of issue 27 to my brand spanking new P.O. Box I'll gladly mail you a replacement copy. And that goes for ANYONE with any kind of book that has such a printing error. Just include a note telling me what's what. What you've got here is a rare printing error that occurs all the time... it's just one of those things in the printing business.

Mr. Kirkman,

I finally tracked down some early issues of Invincible and took your letter column suggestions to heart. 1) Keep the praise to a minimum, 2) number questions and keep them relevant for letter- column readers, and 3) sign a name. I wanted to ask if those suggestions still stand, and if there's anything you would add.

Don't complain about that rape business or any perceived racial or religious bias... but that's not a hard and fast rule.

It seems like you've paced these last couple issues as a [relative] calm-before-the storm before all hell brakes loose with the revenge of the Woodburians (can't wait to see what happens there). I've enjoyed watching the characters develop and the small shockers like Dale getting bit in parallel with Lori's birth, and Carol offering herself first to Billy and then to the pet-zombie... a despairingly narcissistic yet martyr-like sacrifice. And then I laughed, because Carol getting bit at the end of 41 was also a very Sally Field moment... "you DO like me"!

Groan.

A few questions:

1) Where was Michonne in this issue? Talking to the voices again?

Taking a nap? It's a big prison.

2) The cover to 40 lost me. What is Rick

splattered with blood and mouth agape about? Dale? And what is that open gash on his nose from? Just his old scar? I wonder if that's one problem with soliciting covers so far in advance...

Well, that was the exact same moment after he cut off Dale's leg--so the cover worked, it was one of the more literal covers. And yes, Rick still has the scar from his fight with Tyreese.

3) The cover to 41, however, was brilliant, because whenever it was solicited months ago I wondered... aw snap does Lori die in childbirth and become a zombie!?! But it's not Lori, it's zombie Barbie. I think you've done that sort of teaser with a lot of the covers and it's great. 27 is my favorite (the zombie reflections in the riot gear helmet), but it was too much to buy over at splashpageart.com and you know... doesn't look good in the living room with the Rodin theme and all.

Thanks? And... you should have bought that cover.

4) Where can I find me a SUPA CRIB like Glenn and Maggie? I need more Walking Dead merchandise.

Available at Wal-Marts everywhere.

Thanks for the ever-great reads,
-Brian Hans

Thanks for the letter.

Hey, Kirkman, thanks for printing my other letter a few issues back about ish 35.

I have a new and serious question for you, which I'm surprised no one has brought up yet.

Rick lost his right hand. Adlard keeps drawing him with his gun still slung on his right hip. How is a man supposed to draw and fire his sidearm without his hand?

True he could 'reach around', (insert your own prison joke) but this would be time consuming and deadly if needed his gun in a hurry.

Logically, he should wear his sidearm in a cross draw rig, or should switch it to his left side so he can draw it with his left hand. Or at the very least, turn the holster around so that the butt is out for his left hand to grab onto. maybe there is a shoulder holster in the armory.

Thanks for doing a super job.
Jerry Dickson.

Well, I don't know that there's a lot of quick draw action going on with Rick. I mean, right now, in the prison at least, there's not zombies jumping out from around corners--he knows when he might need to use a gun--so he can have it drawn

in advance. Also, it slows things down a second or two, but really, reaching over to your other side isn't that hard.

True, the gun is backwards that way, but it would be backwards if he just spun the belt around to the other side too--and there's not a ton of gun belts lying around right now--so--he's kind of stuck with it right now.

Hello, Sir!

It is extremely exciting that you actually read through these fan letters and reply to them yourselves. Hell, I typically read what you write to people and decide based on that if I want to read what other people wrote. Let me get the kissing up out of the way because, sir, this comic/graphic novel/story is AMAZING! I love it. I am actually not even a comic reader...I have a strong interest in comic art and have collected a few comic No1 issues when that was all the craze (right when Spawn came out). Not to mention whole series of comic cards like Marvel's first three sets and it's Masterpiece series. But, I was much younger then and that was many years ago. So, last week I strolled into a comic book store with an avid reader of comics and saw your book. Being a huge fan of the zombie genre, I've heard people throw the name "The Walking Dead" around and knew I had to give it a read... well, I'm glad I did and it's almost sad that I have now caught up to your four long years of work. I even have the hardcovers coming in soon (book three - preordered).

Book three will be out soon.

Tony Moore's artwork from the beginning was amazing and since I got a late start in the series and was reading No6 and No7 back to back it was almost hard for me to accept the way Mr. Adlard was drawing the characters (especially Rick/Lori). But, I can definitely say that I love everything he has done and his art has been the perfect compliment to your amazing writing and story-telling skills. That Mr. Rathburn guy...he's not too shabby either.

Well, he's a little shabby... but only on weekends.

Mr. Rathburn is actually a huge part of why I'm writing to guys (you know, besides the fact that you guys and "The Walking Dead" are completely awesome). I love Rathburn's back cover art. His zombies are very fun to look over and intriguing at the same time. I tried to Google somewhere I could buy posters featuring his zombie artwork, but...no luck. I am definitely going to go out and pick up the poster you've been advertising in the book, but what about a giant, wide print featuring all those zombies Mr. Rathburn's been gracing us with on the back cover. Due to my late start, I know I've missed quite a few, but hopefully a full sized poster

would fix that nicely. Hmmm...is it sick that I want to hang a poster of rotting corpses on my wall?

Not sick at all--I'll definitely think about it.

Mr. Kirkman, sir, thank you for your time reading this. What happened to your site, www.robertkirkman.com that funkotron points to? Also, I do dabble in some webdesign/graphic stuff... Maybe I can throw up an unofficial (or official?) fan page for you guys. I'm not so sure why I don't see many out there. Maybe they get lost in the Google searches. I just hope it'd be ok to use the images/covers for the page.

My site will actually be going live before the end of the year for sure... maybe much, much sooner!

Thanks again -- I don't write many fan letters (or any?) and I definitely have not written to a comic before! Hoping and anxious to hear a response.

Respectfully,
Chris Kuntz

You should write more often.

Hey, Kirkman, I know I just sent you email yesterday about Rick's hand / handgun, but I forgot to add another observation.

First off, good fake out on the front cover of 41. I thought for sure that the Zombie was supposed to be Rick's wife, and that she died of complications after the birth...the zombie does look like her, same type of clothes, and hair....

Not to critique too much, but on the back of the issue...the page that says "Next issue The time has come"..... whoops.... Dale has his LEG BACK and is standing. Obviously this was drawn in advance of the writing.

(Also, I know it is because she is in the foreground, but it looks like Andrea is grabbing Hershel's groin...especially cause the look and his face!!)

Sorry to pick out the small stuff...just trying to keep it real. You guys are great...keep up the good work.

Jerry Dickson.

That cover was done in advance of the issue, and more importantly it was SEEN by the public before the issue where Dale lost his leg came out. So to people who saw that cover--things would be spoiled if he had a peg leg or was on crutches or whatever. So yeah, he's got a full leg there-- but it's not a mistake, it's that way so we don't give things away. Also, there are TPB readers who see the covers to the singles issues months before they read the TPBs, so

*I try to keep the covers as spoiler free as possible.
It's all part of the plan.*

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I've read all of TWD and it is one of the best ongoing series being published today in any medium.

The narrative turns that this book has taken (especially during the Safe Behind Bars arc and the Woodbury excursion) have been gut wrenchingly marvelous. I had to literally put the book down during the rape scene because I needed a break from the horror that had filled me.

As much as I love your book I have two comments (rather than criticisms).

1) Even though I love the realistic black/white artwork of Adlard (so much so that I have--hanging in my apartment--an original page of Charlie's from TWD) lately I've been having a hard time keeping track of the growing cast of characters. Everyone, and I'm sorry for even thinking this...and if you totally disagree, please, say so and help me see it your way...everyone seems to look more and more similar. Sometimes I read a page and I think to myself, "Who is that?"

I understand that we're not dealing with iconic supermen and women...these are regular people...and I can't praise TWD team enough for depicting everyday people in your comic with verisimilitude...and I would totally be okay with it if you responded, "Charlie and I decided that in order to comment on the facelessness of the zombies we would slowly breakdown distinctions between the 'human' cast." But, seriously I don't think that's the case at all. Is it me? I know you're not the voice of the readership but am I the only one having this problem? Do you even think it's a problem?

Is it a problem for SOME people? Yeah... but you know what, there's really not a lot that can be done at this point. The characters DO look very different--VERY different. If I lined up headshots of all the characters you would see that they are very unique looking people and easy to tell apart... but sometimes, in the context of the story, I guess it can get a little confusing. All I can say is that the number of characters in the book will be getting cut back a bit over the next few months--maybe it won't be a problem then.

Here is my second comment:

2) There was a point earlier in the book when Rick had a talk with the guy on the farm about the zombies. It was a beautiful moment in the book. Perhaps the grandest when, for the first time, we, as readers, saw that people--within the

world of TWD, did not all see the zombies in the same way. I think the man said something like, "They're not monsters. That is my son in there!" It was such a powerful moment that I smiled uncontrollably and I knew--at that very moment--that your world...our world, since every month you share it with me--had blossomed.

I miss those moments. Let me tell you why.

Lately your writing has focused on moments of characterization (perhaps to head off my first comment at the pass). These one page voyerisms haven't really been working for me. I use the word "voyeurisms" because they often depict either two people isolated somewhere in the prison or, if these depicted moments occur in public they're spoken in (what I imagine are) hushed tones. I think the reason that I haven't really been feeling them is because they're too short. The overarching narrative to the book is plodding and methodical--much like the biters and roamers themselves--but the brevity of the short vignettes is too much of contrast, I think.

The effect the conversation Rick had on the farm has yet to be duplicated in such a packed and concise way. (except maybe when one of the arcs finished with the twist reading of your title.) Instead, you and your team have duplicated the effect in more a sustained manner (namely the group moving into the prison and the discovery and escape from Woodbury) and that is, perhaps, even more impressive. But, I can't help but miss those moments of thoughtfulness at the Otherness that your book has seemed to pass up lately in order so that the characters can become more familiar to us.

I guess what I'm still trying to gauge is, what is at the core of your book? I read it as a realistic metaphor not realism with touches of metaphor. How do you, and the other members of the team, view your book?

Yours truly,
Steffan DelPiano

Well, uh... I view it as a continuing tale of human suffering. There will be short scenes and long scenes. Things will speed up and slow down, but in the end it will be a chronicle of years of suffering endured by a group of (hopefully) realistic characters who have grown and changed over time. That's the plan at least. There will be more scenes like the one you mentioned, I promise. There's a lot of life left in this book, yet.

And there you go--another end to another letters column.

I hope to see you all back here next month.

*See you then!
-Robert Kirkman*



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, readers -- Amanda here! So, Rick made it through, but just like Carl we all knew he would, right? When these letters were first published, back in December of 2007, we didn't have a WALKING DEAD TV show or the knowledge of another 148 issues to help ease the tension of a cliffhanger like that. Part of the fun of looking back on these old letters is seeing what everyone thought when it was anyone's death or future on the line. Enjoy!

And that was issue 45... I hope you all liked it.

Okay, short letters column this month--the holidays are on the way and I'm trying to get these books out ASAP. I hope you understand.

Now, let's move onto the mail.

Hi Robert,

Another good issue. I was just wondering what ever happened to creating a character guide to print every month in the back of the book promised in a letter column many, many issues back? It would be helpful to have a reminder about who everyone is. It would make the stories even impactful, seeing as how I sometimes forgot how everyone is related to each other. Please consider it or I will have Ant Man cancelled. I have that power.

Kid Kaos

Well, thanks for cancelling Ant-Man... you'd think that'd give me more time to put together a new character guide--but sadly, it hasn't worked out. I'll see what I can do about getting one in the next issue or so... it's just a matter of having the time to do it, really.

Hello Mister Kirkman,

It's been a while since I last wrote to The Walking Dead. However I have kept up with

every issue that has come out. This is still by far my favorite comic. Even when I was between jobs and had to make cuts to what I could and could not do. Walking Dead was the only comic I made sure I still got every month. It's that good.

Thank you very much--I really appreciate the support.

I have to say the end of issue 42 left my jaw hanging to the floor. All I could say was, "Holly shit!"

If this had been a TV series I could see this being the major cliff hanger at the end of a season. Leaving everyone wonder what the hell was going to happen until the next seasons started. Good thing this is a monthly comic. I would hate waiting all summer long to see where this is going next.

Great writing, great stories, great comic..... That is until the aliens arrive. Then I'll have to rethink everything.

Eric L. Busby

Glad you dug it. I hope you enjoyed seeing the EXACT SAME cliffhanger in issue 43 also, heh.

Dear Mr. Kirkinator,

I enjoy reading TWD due to the fact I love zombie anything. The story is amazing, as well as the art. I just have a problem with something. Rick's hand. I'm tired of seeing him bummed out about his stump, "Ohh, I can't play basketball anymore, boohoo. I have a useless stump where there once was a five fingered, useful apendige." I give me a break.

Have you ever lost a hand? Give the guy a break.

I think Rick needs to take after a certain well known someone with a ass kicking replacement for a missing hand. I am of course talking about Ash from The Evil

Dead series. Now before I get flak about this let me explain. I know a chainsaw would be unrealistic due to the fact there is a shortage of gas (even after the raid on the National Guard Station, it would be a waste), and a robotic hand like the one from Army of Darkness would be out of the question due to the fact Rick could never be as crafty as The King.

So, let's look at what we have to work with. In earlier issues, Rick seemed to wield a hatchet nicely, so hatchet hand? Eh, maybe. I think he would still have the swinging power, as long as they can't get it fastened on there good enough. Groovy? I think so.

Even more outlandish? How about Captain Hook style? Nah, you would have to go through the eye socket with the pointy end and that could be tricky to get out, plus Rick would have to find a pirate uniform to actually look cool.

One of the best ways i think he could go is a bludgeoning weapon. I know they don't have any Medieval maces or spiked balls, but some type of viking-like stone mallet, something with weight that can crush a skull or knock something outta the way. A hammer head would be too small (oversized hammer would look ridiculous)

What about a bladed stump? That would be wicked, long but not too long. If the riot gear could be modified to cover all of his stump a small blade would be decent due to the fact the suits are bite proof. I still say a long blade, but I'm sure Mac won't want to give up her katana.

A lawn mower like from Dead Alive would be too big, plus i don't think they have one. Actually, looking back on that, how the hell would he put that one his hand?

We can even talk about non-combat attachments! Anyone need a bottle opener, can opener, file, toothpick?!? Swiss Army Knife Rick, the ultimate handy man.

Rick needs to capitalize on this so called loss. I'm tired of looking at his plain stump and seeing so much potential. Maybe after it heals up a little more, Rick will start thinking straight and turn into a steel appendaged undead killing bad ass. I still love him though, even though he only has one hand. This would totally take away his feelings of uselessness and sad feelings about his "loss."

In all seriousness, I do believe something should be done with Rick's stump. Whatever you do, keep the TWD coming.

Chris Allgood

PS. Hail to the king baby.

Just to give you guys a little insight into my creative process—just to pull the curtain aside a bit—this IS something I've put a LOT of thought into. You see—The Walking Dead is a serious book. I think that's a very important part of its success. Aside from the zombies walking around and a few things I've fudged here and there—most of the things that happen in this book COULD happen in real life. It's "grounded" in reality at least for the most part.

So yeah, chainsaw hand—totally stupid.

BUT, thinking logically... were I in the situation Rick is in... with the one hand and all, at least in a battle situation (like the one we're kind of in now) I'd want to have something there. And realistically it could be done. If he duct taped a butcher knife to his forearm—that could totally work and it could be used for stabbing and cutting. He'd need to have a belt or two on there to hold it on—and a shit load of tape—and it wouldn't last long after being used a few times... but he could get a few good kills in as long as it was fastened well enough.

So I was totally going to put a knife on his arm—at least temporarily from time to time. I even discussed this with my good friend Ed (famous) Brubaker. He suggested a sledgehammer instead, because of the long handle that could be used as a counter weight but I think that would be too heavy—it'd slow him down and keep him off balance.

But anyway—even though him doing this would be logical, and slightly realistic... it would LOOK a bit silly and I'd never hear the end of Evil Dead comparisons which frankly, I'm already sick of (despite how much I love those movies).

So in the end, I decided against it. So (for now at least) he's just going to have a stump... until I change my mind.

Wow.

Suicide by zombie? That's got to be a first, right?

And the saddest part is, it really makes sense for Carol's character, after all the situations she's gone through before.

Wow. Just. . . wow.

Sean Landry

Eh... technically that dude at the end of Day of the Dead beat me to it... but he was a bit more crazy and really fucked things up for everyone else with his suicide. So Carol's was different. But still... Romero (as always) was blazing the trail.

Hey Kirkman,

The latest Walking Dead- shut my mouth. I had written before saying that it didn't seem feasible for Woodbury to attack (not with all the obstacles in their path) but I never considered that they would be so mobile. I was not so surprised to see the Governor alive because I thought you left something on the table after Michonne exacted her revenge by not feeding him to his daughter. That is his daughter, right?

That remains to be confirmed.

The trick now is to see if the Governor is so hell bent on revenge that he would overrun the prison and the fences, compromising the defense that they offer or attack more judiciously. I think the choice has to be made. Does the Governor still want the prison so his people can live there or does he want to kill Rick's lot as quick and painfully as possible? Just thinking ahead.

I loved the movie 28 Days Later but it really stepped up a notch when the Army became as real a monster as the infected (though I am sure there is much debate over that premise). It showed that in 'end times' like this it is not so black-and-white as to who you need to be the most wary of. People (I'm talking about your readers now) have become so complacent with the idea of civilized society that they would most likely assume that in the event of such a crisis all the living would band together, that those that are left would want to carry on with the same prior morality as much as possible. That may not be the case. The Woodbury storyline drove that point home well. And if you look back, you can see that in Rick's character except either Rick has a layer of humanity OR we have been along for the ride with Rick for so long that

we tend to give him the benefit of the doubt.

And now that the Governor and Woodbury thread is continuing it appears as if the bloodthirsty readership will be sated. Though I like the more day-to-day stuff this aspect needs to rear its ugly head. Sometime, somewhere we knew it had to get ugly.

Lastly, congratulations on getting back on schedule. I have a slight idea of the effort that must have taken. Most readers probably do not realize all that's involved in putting out a full comic each month, but if they could they would see that a number of things have to fall together. I assume that the larger companies are able to do so because they have more 'lackeys' to do the 'dirty jobs' than a smaller group as y'all.

Again, my condolences for your loss, Dawson

Well, yeah... the schedule is difficult... that's why most independent books are worse off than we are. But y'know... it's part of the job, so we do our best.

Dear Robert,

I am an Italian guy who happened to be in the US for some time and ended hooked up by your Art. I love US and I love The Walking Dead. Now that I am back to Italy I can hardly wait for TWD trades every six months or so. I have been following the online forum and read there all the spoilers before getting the seventh trade, so I think I know almost everything that happened so far.

Zombies are the monsters I like the most, because they can be everyone: your friends, your relatives, the people you love, and even yourself if you let your guard down. But the scariest thing is what people can do to others after an apocalypse like this. TWD is the best Art on zombies since a long time.

Some questions about the series (I don't read the monthly books, just the trades, so I don't know if these questions have already been asked. If so, just disregard them)

1. We know just few things about the characters before the zombie storm (except for Rick). Maybe you could show flashbacks about each one of them, so that we could see what they were doing when the zombies hit

the news and started to scratch their front door, up to the point we found them in your books. Pretty much like in the first season of the TV series LOST, where they showed each protagonist's story right before the plane crash. And this could work also for showing the story of the Governor and his people. Is this already planned to be shown? If not, can be?

Well, we did a flashback issue... but there's no plans to do regular flashbacks for all the characters. It's just not interesting to me. I want to see where they go—not where they've been.

2. Talking about this, why did you choose to skip the description of the zombie outbreak by starting the story one month after, when Rick wakes up alone in a hospital? The same happened in the movie "28 days later" and I guess that was a choice based on budget (it is expensive to show a civilization crumbling down)... but in a graphic novel you don't have budget limits! You can blow up as many cities as you want! So, what was your reason?

My reasoning was that. We've already seen that a billion times in a billion movies and other stuff. I wanted to get to what people haven't done very much... the long-term effects... show what happens next. That's the idea behind this book. I try not to do anything that's been done in anything else.

3. Have you planned to let people use the radio? I guess batteries are available in a prison, and if not, they have the radios in the cars. Maybe some military radio station is still broadcasting. It would be cool to have hints about the big picture: if there is still a Government and an Army and safe zones somewhere. Will be any of that any time soon?

Stay tuned. I've wanted to keep things pretty contained up to this point—focused on Rick and the rest. We'll see where we go from here.

4. There is a growing interest in zombies lately, especially in the US and the UK. In the theaters there are now, or are planned to be, many zombie or zombie-like projects (Resident Evil: Extinction, 28 weeks later, Rodriguez's Planet Terror, Day of the Dead's remake). In the bookstores, other than your series, I can't forget "World War Z"... Why this revival now? Do you think there might be any connection with the war that US and UK are spearheading (more than every other Countries) also in their homelands?

Fear and unrest breeds stories about the end of the world... so there you go.

Thanks for the big time you give me with these books. I can't stop reading them over and over.

Best regards,
Roberto Dandi

Thanks for writing.

Hi guys,

Just wanted to do a follow up on that last letter- I had said I was disappointed in the lack of fallout from the group after Carol's suicide attempt, but I said that wrong. Obviously there was a HUGE initial fallout, with Rick and Tyrese nearly killing each other, what I meant is that I was disappointed in the lack of follow up with how Tyrese and Carol were acting around each other after what happened.

Shana Cuddy, Boston

Sorry if I misunderstood. Maybe I did drop the ball on that a little... but they just didn't interact much after that.

Mr. Kirkman,

We've hit issue 42 and the Wife and I are still here, reading each new copy with zeal. Do you realize just how big TWD has become? It's all over any Amazon zombie search, not to mention the rest of the web. Hell, at Christmas my brother asked me if we were reading, wanting to make sure we didn't miss out. TWD is quickly seating itself into pop culture. I think that's a tremendous feat for a book not published by the big two. More importantly, in a world currently overwhelmed by zombie fiction (comics, movies, paperbacks) yours stands out as a gem.

Yay!

Quickly, enough with the racist rants and the crying about rape. Ok. Come on peeps, it's a comic, not reality. We're dealing with a survivalist situation that is going to bring out the best in some folks and the worst in others. It's that simple. Allow me to use Katrina as an example. Some people helped

others, giving them food, shelter, or getting them to safety. Many other people robbed, looted, and preyed on those they say as weak. It's human nature, IMHO, that when it comes to survival that most of us will show who we really are. I think in this fashion TWD reflects reality fairly close. This is one brutal world. Limbs are coming off willy nilly, people are killing each other for sport, and all folks can focus on is one rape? I just don't get it. Is the rape terrible? Sure it is, but so is Dale's loss of half his leg or Rick's hand. I don't see tons of folks writing in about how Kirkman must hate whites. Perhaps it's time to move on.

You want to talk about fucked up? Lets us talk about Carol allowing the captive roamer to bite her. Now that's fucked up! Having a romp in the sack with Billy, probably giving him God knows what kind of nightmares, is a serious twist of the knife, ya know? Strange enough, I'm sad to see Carol go. She added some serious drama to the story.

It was cool to see Rick and Lori's baby born in the prison. New life in a dead world. I have thoughts that Alice is more than a convenient plot addition for the birth. I'm thinking there's drama to come with Alice. I'm also waiting to see if Hershel's faith, a faith that seems a little too over the top, leads to trouble at some point. Now Glen and Maggie are trying to conceive, I don't know but I doubt it will end with a smile.

I have been eager, for months mind you, for the Woodbury attack. Finally! At last they attack and what do I get? Another damn cliff hanger! You are an evil man Mr. Kirkman. Very evil. I'd actually thought about the zombies around the prison and cannot wait to see how they work in the attack. Then again the Woodbury group has a tank. A frikin' tank!

The world is full of dead people, limbs are flying, some are giving up, and now the only other living people our gang has found in all this time are going to attack them! I say bring it on.

Thanks for keeping us on the edge of our seats.

Chad and Venessa Cayler

You tell them Chad and Venessa!

Dear Robert,

I was referred to your book by Daryl, the Owner, of Collection Corner in Burlington NJ. It took me a while to get caught up as I started with issue 11, bought the trades, had a tough time finding issue 28 & 29 which I missed. However, I just finished Issue No 45 and loved every minute of it. Finally, caught up, this is truly a great read.

My first comic was Daredevil No 18 so I have been reading since before Peter saw M.J. I have the entire X-men run but they seem to have gotten very convoluted. I have been spoiled by Miller, Moore, Bendis and now you. I have always been a zombie fan. In fact one of my greatest memories is seeing Night of the Living Dead with Freaks on Halloween at Oklahoma State University back in 1974. This has been such a refreshing book. Thank you for creating such a terrific story and I wish you continued success. I am penning a letter to Invincible as well. Thanks in advance for printing my letter. Go Pokes!

Warm Regards,
Martin Blazy

Hmm... I just printed a letter in Invincible about Daryl, the owner of Collection Corner in Burlington, NJ recommending my books. I really should send this guy a Christmas card or something. Oh, wait... you wrote that letter too... I guess it's just YOU, Martin.

That's it for now, kids. Be sure to be back here very soon for the senses-shattering issue 46!

Until then!

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, Letter Hacks, Amanda here. This is a tough issue, and one that is always difficult to re-read. Even though we're almost 50 issues in, and there have been a number of deaths so far, I still find myself going through the five stages of grief. It's hard to lose the people you want to stick around, and this is one that hits me the hardest. Tyreese, you'll be sorely missed.

First of all, sorry for the delay. The holidays crept up on me and pretty much wrecked my ability to get this book out. As I type this, Charlie is working on #48, so we should catch up in fairly short order. Things are moving along nicely for us to have an issue-filled 2008, so don't worry... this will just be another small hiccup along the way, hopefully the last.

Second, so long Tyreese, huh?

Tyreese has been one of my favorite characters in the book for a long time. I'm just as sorry to see him go as, I'm sure, a lot of you reading this are. Now, in the past, I've been raked over the coals any time I do anything to a minority character. It's not fair, and we've discussed it to death in this letters column, so I'd just as soon not have to deal with it in the letters column for the next six months.

While some deaths in this series are very spur of the moment actions that I try not to think through (because it makes things more spontaneous, like real life) Tyreese's death has been planned almost since his introduction. It's always been something I've known about and have been working toward. It will have great impact on the series and well, frankly... nobody lives forever in this book.

Nobody.

So these things will continue to happen for the duration of the series. Characters have to die... that's just how the book works. So while I will miss Tyreese, I have the luxury of knowing what's ahead for the rest of the crew in this book, and so I know things will be okay.

So, uh... don't flip out.

Now, let's answer a bit of that mail.

Hey Kirkman,

All right, first things first: I'm a fan of Walking Dead. I dig it a lot, and I hope you keep putting it out for years yet to come. (You can feel the 'but' coming, can't you?)

Bring it on!

But here's the thing. Lately, your pacing really, really blows, and for me, issue 43 was really the last straw. Dude, you can't keep throwing cliffhangers at us then just not addressing them for a month. That's what I call self-indulgence and wasted opportunity.

What really gets me is that you *know* that shit is gonna piss us off, because you asked for our patience at the start of the letters page. Well, I got news for you, man. You gotta earn our patience. 'Cause mine is all used up after issue after issue that goes nowhere, even as you try to build up an imminent threat. You go on to say that everything that takes place is important later.

Well shit man, why not tell us later then? Do a flashback or something when it's relevant. Don't interrupt your momentum to give us some bullshit background that, by your own admission, we don't need to know yet. That's lazy writing man.

Well, that's basically what I did. The important stuff from 43 that would be important "later" was important starting in 43. I didn't slow down the momentum of 36-42 by showing you the stuff in 43... instead, I saved it for a flashback.

The story has pretty much all but ground to a standstill for now. And that is downright amazing, considering you have a bunch of guys and a tank sitting outside the prison at the moment.

Yeah, it builds tension, right?! Right?!

So pick up the fuckin' pace man! If you keep on doing these tangents that overwhelm the main narrative, you're going to move into the

realm of literary masturbation. I mean, for god's sake, Rick & Co. have been at the prison for more than two years of real time, and not enough is happening, even regarding (the initially excellent) character development.

Actually, Rick and company haven't been at the prison very long at all, not even a year. Lori was pregnant when Rick showed up and she gave birth nine months later, in issue 39. So they've only been here 7 months or so. A lot has happened to them in 7 months.

Anyways, I love this comic a lot. You've managed to single-handedly make zombies cool again, and the cast you've put together is second to none, I think. Don't squander what you and Charlie have worked so hard to put together, as even your most ardent fans grow impatient with glacial pacing! You deserve better dude.

Best,
Ben P

Well, starting with issue 49, things will be a whole heck of a lot faster. I'm taking my time with this Woodbury battle... it's probably the most important thing to happen in the book to date... but after that's over... it's full steam ahead.

Dear Captain Kirk(man)

Why the heck are you apologizing? The flashback issue was a great change of pace, insightful and refreshing. The governor is the consummate scumbag politician (reminds me of a guy named Anibal), and in a few ways he is a dark doppelganger to Rick.

I was not shocked at all by his appearance last issue, because some of our fighting men in Iraq have sustained worse injuries in the battlefield, and his "death" lacked the seal of finality of everything else we've seen before.

V Rosario Fermaint
San Juan

Glad you liked it. I too was pretty surprised when I saw so many people were under the impression The Governor was dead. I didn't even mean to imply that.

Mr. kirkman

I have to say the Governor is truly one of

the sickest most vile, evil pieces of scum characters I have ever read. I love him. Just when I thought you couldn't take him any further with raping and beating of Michonne, the live zombie feeding in a gladiator pit, severed zombie heads in fish tanks as entertainment, etc. You take him to another level not only do you have him survive Michonne's attack but you have him molest his zombie daughter that is just fucking sick where that hell did you come up with that idea,.... you know what never mind I might not want to know the answer to that. Thank you for such a great comic book I have been with you from day one and I just about love every issue. I never wrote before but after reading №43 I had to say something. You have truly taken zombies stories to another level. You are truly a superman among insects. Keep up the impeccable work

-James

Yeah, the zombie kiss... eh. I was just trying to think of the worst things The Governor could ever do. The Governor is the worst case scenario for what living in this world does to people. I want him to be the most extreme case.

Mr. Kirkman,

OK... after many "close calls" I'm finally writing my first ever letter to a comic book.

Congratulations, sir, you've popped my comicbook fan-letter cherry.

I've been a fan of THE WALKING DEAD since the very first issue (in fact, I remember running all over town trying to find a store that actually ordered the first issue after I heard about it) and now, finally, I've come to the point where there's a question I just can't wait to have answered.

What was the deal with the Governor before the zombie epidemic?

Based on what we know of his character, I'm guessing that he wasn't necessarily Governor before all this started and that he somehow used the disaster to insert himself (no creepy pun intended) in a position of power... is that the case? What the hell is the back-story on this evil piece o' crap?

If we're going to learn more about his past, later I'll gladly accept a "wait and see" answer... but if not, how about some insight

into this evil prick? I mean, really, what the Hell is the deal with this guy?

Well, I really would like to show some of his past, just to give people a little more insight into his character. But I don't know if I should. The jury's still out on that one. Only time will tell.

Oh... one more thing. I've been raving about this book to my sweet lady for a while now and she recently asked me "Do the zombies digest the food they've eaten? If not, how can they keep eating? What happens to it?"

So... does the food somehow get dissolved and absorbed into their bodies... or, not to put too fine a point on it, do zombies poop?

Whatever the answer (or answers), keep up the good work, sir! I'm in for the long haul!

SINcerely,
Dirk Manning

Do zombies poop? Well, I'd think not. There's a few options here. In Marvel Zombies I stated the zombies had a powerful stomach acid that dissolved all the flesh they ate. A friend of mine, Mark Kidwell, hypothesized that zombies would just eat and eat until their stomach's burst. And that zombies would be walking around with gaping holes where their stomachs would be. I don't know the science behind it all, but maybe zombies do continually "evacuate" like recently dead people do. Obviously their digestive track doesn't work... they're dead... but maybe flesh and guts can just pass on through, all the way to the logical conclusion (pooping, kids). Now, I don't picture a zombie stopping and squatting or anything like that... but maybe they're soiling themselves as they shamble along.

Okay... that was fun.

Dear Cap'n Kirkman,

So now we're doing issues without the cast entirely? I guess it was okay, though; I just don't understand about the little zombie girl—she is dead, right? I don't have much to say other than that.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Thanks for writing anyway, Andrew. Always a pleasure.

Hello,

I really enjoy the book and have finally caught up through the trades enough to read new issues. I enjoy the realistic conversations and the overall believable tone of the series. You're the main reason I began paying attention to the names of writers on my comics. I began looking for other things you were writing and ironically enough realized I was already reading half of them. I began to read Invincible through trades while still getting (but not yet reading) Invincible and related books. You have become one of my favorite writers and a great inspiration for me as a wannabe-writer.

I enjoy the way the characters in WD have passed on. Some deaths truly disappointed me but only because I felt I knew the characters. At no point while reading this book have I questioned one thing that has transpired or thought of any plot point as a creative mistake. I find no flaws in this book. I was sickened when Lori cheated on Rick, I was shocked when Carol died, I was sympathetic when Michonne was raped and I had to turn away (and had to read it again for sheer shock value) when the Governor was tortured. If Dale had died I would have been heart broken. To take characters and make them part of a reader's life takes talent. Needless to say, you are talented.

I work in a comic book store in Gastonia, NC and have talked a few people into getting your other books but unfortunately, Walking Dead remains my solo adventure. In a way it makes me feel like the book is written specifically for me. I feel like I'm the survivor no one sees or hears. This book is written in such a way that it takes us to a place where even in a world filled with zombies, we can relate to the characters. That's what I love about Walking Dead.

I also enjoy the long letter column. However, I was wondering why letter columns are never collected in trades. I have never heard an explanation for this, I was wondering if perhaps you knew.

The letters columns are kind of dated, I think... and they'd take up a ton of damn room in the TPBs making them bigger and more expensive. I doubt that would be worth it in the long run.

Although, I do love money... so if anyone thinks they'd order a TPB of just the letters columns let me know. If I hear from a ton of you—I'll do it. But... I'll feel really silly and ashamed, just so you know.

I enjoy your work, and I am a truly grateful fan. You and a video game called Dead Rising are responsible for my love of zombies (I don't like many other Horror movies besides zombie related ones). I hope to one day be able to write comics and you serve as a great example of what a writer should be.

May the Dead keep Walking,
Adam Davis

Well, thanks so much for all the kind words of praise, Adam. I wish you the best of luck with breaking in as a writer. It's quite tough.

I got Dead Rising for my X-Box but I've never played it. I look forward to one day having the time. I hear it's awesome.

Kirkman,

I didn't discover Walking Dead until around issue 28 or so. A friend introduced me via the trade paperbacks and, since then, I've been hooked! At the end of each issue I can't wait for next month to get here so I can read the next chapter.

At the end of issue 43 you said you were prepared for complaints. Well, I'm here to surprise you. While reading the issue I was expecting to see the scene with the Governor and his crew approaching the prison about midway through, and the last half would be the assault on our friends that reside there. After finishing the issue, I have to admit, I was a bit disappointed. Not because it was a bad read, but because I'm twice as excited as I ever have been about the next issue and I still have to wait thirty days for it to get to me! I think you chose a great way to tell this story. The flashback issue was an excellent idea. To hell with all the naysayers. The only bad thing about this issue is waiting for the next issue.

Walking Dead is one of the greatest comics out there right now.

I don't care if this letter gets printed or not. I just wanted you and everyone else involved to know that you are doing an amazing job with this book. It's the one I most look forward to every month. Even with all the heroes and mutants running around in the comic world, I say Make Mine Zombies!

Brandon

Well, much to my surprise, response to issue 43

seems to be largely positive. I'll try and do more all flashback issues to slow down the pacing from here on out. Thanks!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I was tuned into The Walking Dead a little over a year ago by a friend who lent me the first TPB and I have been a loyal reader since then.

I have been like a kid in a candy store with each new issue due to the rich character development, the realistic portrayals of human conflict and suffering during extreme events and the obvious care that you, Charlie and Cliff show for these characters month after month.

Issue 43 was not one to disappoint.

While there was a pang of "loss" for not getting to see in this issue the Governor's assault on the prison, I was nonetheless gratified by this story. The extra delay in seeing the assault will make the inevitable conflict all the more immediate and intimate when it finally happens, primarily because of the length of time readers like myself have spent emotionally invested in these characters. We don't want to see bad things happen to the people/characters we like, but as we've learned all throughout this great story: no one is truly golden. EVERYONE SUFFERS.

Issue 44 will bring us readers to a place we've been dreading since these wonderful and tragic characters showed up at the prison. They will face a threat far greater than any zombie horde. They will face their own living kind. They won't be facing traumatized, yet rational human beings. They will be attacked by people who have been living at the razor's edge for weeks on end, who are driven by fear, death and suffering. At the head of this vanguard of destruction is a maniacal monster whom his followers fear and in a twisted way, love and trust.

Thus, my belief that you were right to tell more of the Governor's story now, in one issue.

In issue 43 we've received a further glimpse into the depth's of this man's very sad existence. I appreciate being able to see how the villain in a story thinks, and see the kind of loyalty and passion (and ultimately, fear) he can inspire in his followers. I like to

see where the depravity lies and how many moral boundaries are sacrificed with each passing look at the villain. The sequence of the Governor plucking out the zombie girl's teeth in order to kiss her was perfectly disturbing and is, I hope, a foreshadowing of the bizarreness to come at the prison.

The most intriguing part of 43 was the minor Bob character. He's pressed into healing and caring for the mutilated Governor and in so doing is forced to come out his own alcoholic stupor to deal with what could best be described as a nightmare reality, but reality nonetheless. The body posture and facial expression of Bob in the last 2 panels of page 20 is great because to me it appears that he's totally unsure of what he's gotten himself into by saving this man's life. In a way it seems to be a grim acceptance of the situation, while at the same time some measure of awe. By rights the Governor was basically a dead man, but this drunk with practically zero medical experience somehow was able to "resurrect" him and in so doing inadvertently unleashed a demon.

One thing I'd like to point out, is that it wasn't that Bob was such a good medic that suddenly came out of nowhere that saved Governor's life—although he certainly did save his life. The idea is that Michonne was keeping The Governor alive... so she could torture him more. His wounds were bad, but not impossible to heal from.

I wonder if Bob has a larger role to play down the line, or if I'm off base and he'll settle back into the background where he came from? I can't wait to find out!

Thank you Mr. Kirkman for being true to your characters and their story.

Sincerely,
Corey Sauer

You may in fact see Bob again soon. Stay tuned.

Kirkman;

Damn, man! I almost puked when I saw that "kiss scene" in issue № 43! What the f#&k were you thinking about?? You're sick, you know?

Charlie, he's sick too!
And Cliff...!

Anyway, keep up the good work. I love this book!

(Shit! Does it mean I am as sick as you...?)

J. J. del Val

I was thinking of ways to make you puke, J.J. I'll obviously have to try harder next time.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I just want to start off saying how much this comic rocks. I'm a huge horror/zombie fanatic and just got hooked on this comic 2 years ago, when i went out looking for some good zombie slash horror comic, but all I found was cheesy ones. That was until a friend recommended me to The Walking Dead. I started at issue №24 and was instantly hooked and went out and bought all issues up to date.

I think the thing that got me hooked was the fact that The Walking Dead was a never ending zombie story. The characters were full of emotion and personality, the artwork was amazing and full of detail while the storylines and subplots were nail biting and addictive to read on. Still, I have not up to this date, found a comic book as worthy as this one. I just want to give you a big Kudos and to everyone who works with you.

Thanks!

Now to the comic book, I have a few comments and questions for you...

1) Good job on the ending on issue №42, I was getting tired of seeing the gang in the prison waiting until someone got bitten by a zombie unexpectedly. So when I turned the page to see the Governor back in action my jaw was to the floor and I was so anxious to see the next issue. I just want to beg you to be merciful on all of the characters because at this point I don't want to see anybody leave the comic or turn into a zombie, well except for Patricia.

You're a bit out of luck on that one. Patricia is the only one who survives!

2) Just wanted to thank you for killing off carol. Just curious, why did you make carol the one who does all the weird crazy things? I mean never had I read or seen anything with a character whom tried to kill herself, was so alone she asked to be with a married couple, went into hiding for about a dozen issues, then sleep with someone 20 years younger, then actually successfully kill herself.

Well, I just wanted to show how stressful life in this book actually is and how crazy it can make weaker people. Carol was a pretty weak, dependent person. Things wouldn't work out for people like her in this world.

3) I just don't understand how the people in Woodbury not understand how the Governor isn't a bad guy or at least be suspicious of him. I mean, do they just go and watch the zombie fights and see strangers fighting Zombies and never see them again. Aren't they curious of where all these people are coming from or why they never see them again?

Most of the zombie fights are staged... remember when the two guys fought afterward because the fight was too real? Most of the time two guys get in there and fake fighting surrounded by the zombies. People getting bit was few and far between.

4) I think you should elaborate more on how people can turn into zombies without one biting you, or how this whole mess started in the first place. Was it like a plague or a rapture kind of thing?

Well, that starts to get into the origin of all this stuff, and I think that's unimportant to the series itself. There will be smaller answers as things progress... but never will we see the whole picture.

5) I why do you still keep the comic in black&white? I mean, if I had to pick whether it could be in color or black and white, I would totally choose color. Not just for the fact of whether I can tell if tyreese is black or white (yeah I had to skip over all the racist crap in previous hack letters) but it would be a hundred times more appealing to read if it was in color.

I disagree. I prefer it in black and white. The covers have enough color for me. I think black and white sets the perfect mood for the series.

To end this off I just want to say again this comic is amazing and one of the best zombie tales in the business. Also, I am looking forward to seeing Rick, his family and friends in many issues to come and keep up the nail biting stories.

Sincerely,
Brooke Kennedy (yes, girls actually read this comic!)

Yay! Girls!

Dear Mr Kirkman,

Big fan from across the pond, Scotland to be exact but that's enough about me this is about you. I've got a few questions that i have to ask my apologies but these aren't about TWD there about other projects of yours. The walking dead is perfect! well almost i have a request not a question about TWD

1) I know you don't like to put zombies of real people in your creation but i think you should make an exception for one man. The legend himself (no not Todd Macfarlane) but the grand daddy of zombie horror Mr George A. Romero come on! He deserves it. The man is a god, pay homage to the man who started it all come on!

George has already appeared as a zombie no less than three times in this series. I can't believe nobody's noticed.

2) Any insider info on the Haunt project with the great Todd McFarlane (Spawn's my number one Image comic TWD is a close second, sorry)?

I just got a mess of pages from the artist on the series today. The first issue should be out this summer—look for it!!

3) Finally Marvel Zombies 2, I have only read the first issue and by the time you read this and maybe print it (hint hint) the series will be finished and time may have answered my question but where is Captain America ? I know the Red Skull yanked out his brain but he can't be really dead. This is Cap were talking about. Marvel my have killed him off in the aftermath of civil war but come on! Keep him alive somewhere by alive i really mean alive-ish.

See the end of issue 3.

Thanks for reading,
Stewart McNaught

P.S. zombie Macfarlane and Romero COME ON!

I'll see what I can do.

To the crew behind the best title ever:

I have been a fan of zombie movies for eleven

to twelve years, and sadly on heard about your series about three months ago. The manager (Matt) at Atomic Comics loved your work, and when I happened to come across the trades he was putting on display, I asked him about the series. He told me that I needed to immediately pick up the first trade, and in the end if I absolutely hated it, then he would buy it from me. I listened and picked up the first trade. I finished reading it in less than two hours that night. I HAD to know what came next. I went first thing the next morning and found the first two hardcovers on the shelf. I bought both, as well as the next two trades and all of the remaining issues that had yet to be collected.

Two days before issue 44 came out, I had re-read the entire series for the SIXTH time. I have never read a series from start to finish as many times before this. I have to say that I am not a fan of black and white art... but, I wouldn't take this book any other way. There has yet to be a point that I thought was dull. I noticed that Jeffrey Gibson wrote in about how slow the book was becoming, and I disagree with him.

Yeah! Right on!

I feel like the book would have suffered if you made them go out on adventures instead of preparing themselves for what was coming, as well as trying to live their lives and retain some sanity. Sure the book would have moved a little faster, but considering the world they are living in, I know that I would rather take things easy, and save my strength. You never know when the group would need me and my hammer. (And yes, I would use a hammer.)

Now, I do have some questions:

1) Do you think you will ever cover the origin? Maybe in a one-shot/ flash-back kind of deal?

You know, never say never. If sales were to plummet and I needed to pay my bills, I can't say I wouldn't do "THE WALKING DEAD: ORIGIN" but I really have no plans to. It's just not important to the story.

2) When the battle is resolved, assuming the Governor lives, will you explain what that creepy kiss was about with his daughter? It looked like he would have slipped her the tongue if Bob wasn't in the room.

There's really not much to explain, the Governor is a fucked up dude.

3) Recently I picked up and watched "Land of the Dead", and I was wondering if Romero had gotten his idea for the "biter" fights from you or was it just a coincidence?

It technically did appear in his flick first... but I figured the execution was different enough that I'd just move ahead as planned. This was something that was planned before the first issue shipped.

Also if you haven't seen it, it is awesome. My wife loves zombie movies, but I am trying frequently to get her to read your book. If it wasn't for sequential art, she would dig it. That said:

4) Do you thing you would ever write or have someone else write a novel for the Walking Dead?

No, but I might write one myself.

and finally

5) I'm sure others have said it, but would you please make it into a tv series or movie series at some point? I would love to see the characters on screen.

Me too—only time will tell.

Thank you for the time. I agree that you shouldn't need to comment anymore on the shipping of the book. I'm just happy that it's there, and I have no problem re-reading to pass the time—I'm still trying to find the re-occurring zombie mentioned in the hard cover.

-Jake Combs

Well, we are always late, but we still put out more comics in a year than a ton of other series, I mean... a ton. So there is cause to complain, we don't hit our exact dates... but we've still made it to issue 46 in just a hair over four years.

With that, I leave you!

See you back here very soon for another rip-roaring installment of THE WALKING DEAD!

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hi readers, Amanda here. Another dreaded issue in this story arc, and no one continues to be safe, you follow me? Pouring one out for our dear friend, Axel, tonight. I'm not sure how the Governor has survived so many close calls either... we can only hope his luck might be running out.

If you're keeping tabs on it, Paolo Rivera's cover this issue is just a stunner, you don't want to miss these last two. See you back again in just two weeks' time as this arc comes to its dramatic finale, but until then enjoy these classic Letter Hacks!

Whoa, intense, huh?

Yeah, I think after this issue you guys can really get a sense of just how much things will be changing after this arc. Big things are in store for this book. These are very exciting times for all of the creative team. I hope you guys are digging it.

Not a lot of time for chatting here—so I'll dive right into the mail.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I started picking up the TWD trades about six months ago, after coming back to comics early last year. Three weeks ago I caught up, bought issue 43, and added 'Dead' to my reserve box. Wednesday, 44 was waiting for me and it was sweet indeed. I knew there would be some kind of battle...but I never expected the Governor to have to turn tail and run. And man, Andrea just gets more and more bad-ass. In fact, it's a testament to your storytelling prowess that I was so concerned about her...that I completely forgot to worry about Rick.

And now the insinuation is you're going to kill him.

I know you're really good with plot twists, but for the life of me I can't figure out which way you're going to go with this. Either way — if he lives or dies — I have no doubt the story will be typically engaging, emotional,

and riveting...

But please don't kill Rick.

Come on.

From the last two letters pages it seems some people have a problem with his sometimes-rigidly-enforced leadership. Personally, I never thought Rick overstepped his bounds. If anything it's when he's begun to believe this himself and allow others to make big decisions that things have usually gone horribly wrong. But even if he sometimes gets a little bitchy...

Don't kill Rick.

I'm not going to stop collecting or anything (at least I doubt it) if you do, but...man...I'll be sad. I mean, the guy just had a kid.

Come on.

All that pining over a fictional character...is directly due to the team on this book. I just want you to know I consider the characters in TWD to be the most realistically drawn (in both senses) and best-written characters in "genre comics" today.

(There might be some romance/emo-notebook/satire thing out there with better characterization, but I don't read that crap.)

(nor should you.)

And I have to second Karith Cashion's comments from the last lettercol. All you Grade A comics scribes are killing us. There's just too much talent out there. What with You, the Powers Guy, the Scary British Somnabulist Fetishist, The Cap-Killer, The Irreverent Irish Shit-Kicker (not to mention the Buffy Guy, the Spies, Sex, & Skullshirt Guy, and the Last-Man-Currently-On-The-Picket-Line) I have very little time to do housework or listen to charming stories about my friends' children or to complain about politics or reality TV or the religious right...

I can't figure out who you're talking about.

Wait...Oh...I guess I should thank you...

So...

Thanks for my favorite comic,
(and seriously, don't kill Rick.)

JB Love
Savannah, Ga

PS

Hey — if these characters last long enough, it would be really cool to see them make their way down here to Savannah. Our historic district would look great crawling with Charlie Adlard zombies...

I'll see what we can do about getting down to Savannah.

Now, regarding your comments on Rick... I can't really comment. The arc is called "no one is safe" so there's that... and what better way to illustrate that absolutely NO ONE is safe. Of course—why would I be so adamantly hinting at something coming up in the book? Wouldn't that just spoil things? Or maybe I'm trying to throw you off... or maybe, just maybe... he'll suffer a fate WORSE than death... Christ—who knows. I will say... the arc ends next issue... so all answers are contained therein.

Dear Mr Kirkman,
Thank you for writing the most addicting, and best zombie comic ever. I'm only curious about one thing. I was re-reading the first volume, and I realized that the escaped convict that shot Rick putting him in a coma resembles Axel a lot. Is it a coincidence, or will that be brought up later, if Axel was the escaped convict? Thanks for being awesome.

-Dylan Goldman

Pure coincidence... they really don't look THAT much alike. Axel isn't missing any teeth, I believe. It's just like Doctor Stevens, mentioned in issue 2, and Doctor Stevens from Woodbury. The first is named after my family doctor when I was a child... the other is named after none other than Terry Stevens, my friend and artist on a few of my early projects like Battle Pope Presents: Saint Michael.

Dear Robert & Crew

I'll try and keep this brief as I wrote a long brown nosing letter to Invincible today also. Walking Dead, amazing, awesome, always spectacular yadda yadda. Now onto my question. I've thought (And I'm sure others also) that a The Walking Dead TV series would be possibly the greatest serial drama/thriller ever. What's your opinion on this and

do you think it would ever happen?

Thanks, keep up the fudging excellent quality.

ReZourceman
Michael Jamieson,

All I can really say is that I'm ALL FOR IT. I can't guarantee it will ever happen, but I'd sure like it to. Who knows? Maybe some day. I often times get emails that say "have you ever considered making it a TV show on HBO?" Well... it's not really up to ME or it would have premiered years ago. So yeah... I'd love for it to happen, but I'd also do my best to make sure it was AWESOME.

Hey Kirkman,

I just read twd 44 loved it, bit of an anti climax but I'm sure they'll be back. I loved seeing the gov all pissed off after Andrea took out half his men seeing him punch that fat guy out of anger was funny. I was so worried for Andrea after seeing the cover to 44 the group really need her skills as a marksmen because Glenn can't shoot for shit. Rick is a dead man no one survives being gut shot like that and with their crude medical supplies he's fucked unless the blood is misleading and he's only been grazed. I hope so. Rick deserves a better death than that.

People have survived similar injuries... I promise. Still, though... it remains to be seen if Rick will.

It really shows that you've thought of every angle to make it as real as possible. The fact that the gov didn't all of a sudden show up with a SWAT team but a bunch of rag tag redneck survivors who can't shoot. Has he brought everyone from Woodbury to fight?

Most of them.

You seem to dig criticism so here goes a couple of the WD trades I've bought mainly Volume 3 and 7 look like they were printed using a very crude photocopier the gray tones are so bad when you compare them to my single issues. Have you seen any like this? Also Invincible volume 8 was the same any comment?

Frankly, Quebecor, the top printer in the country, who printed these trades, has kind of gone downhill. It's something that really frustrates me, because I've been using them since my self-publishing days. Now, I thought copies that were that bad hadn't made it to circulation. A recent reprinting of Volume 3 got printed TWICE by Quebecor before we had to move it to another

printer because they just couldn't seem to print something that didn't look like crap. If you got your hands on a bad book, or two, chances are—they're not all like that. You should be able to return it to your retailer for a good copy. I apologize for the inconvenience. Unfortunately, in most cases, I get five copies to look over, and make sure are well-printed... before the whole run ships out, and so there's always the possibility that I'm seeing the BEST of the run, which is frustrating.

Anyway, I believe the problem is fixed now. We'll see.

Also compared to the Invincible trades The TWD trades are boring! No introductions, no rough sketches or behind the scenes character designs! All stuff us twd fans would love. How's about a pin up section in the twd singles like in Invincible?

Well, both books are by me, but I decided to try a different approach with TWD, which came out AFTER Invincible. With TWD, I try to make the trades the basic story—that's all you get. With the issues you get letters columns, like this one, and bonus stories like the Christmas tale that ran in issue 32—or wherever, which isn't in a TPB. I just wanted to try something different—and this book sells better! Now, there are next to ZERO sketches done for this series... most characters are designed on the page, there's no costumes to design or space ships or whatever like there is with Invincible, so there's not as much to share—so it makes sense to do this with the TPBs.

Now, as far as pin-ups go... I decided before the book shipped that I would never run pin-ups in this series. The reason for this is that it seemed like a very serious book to me, and I figured ALL the pin-ups would be random zombie drawings or even goofy little drawings featuring the characters doing funny stuff... and I felt that would undercut the tone of the series. So I decided not to run any pin-ups... and every pin-up I've ever been offered has been a random zombie drawing or a funny strip or illustration.

That's all I can find wrong with my favorite comic ever. I just got a special edition of night of living dead with a great documentary called reflections of the dead. Half of the actors in notld were shareholders and collaborators on the film. Did you know George Romero's first company was called Latent Image? Cool, eh?

I didn't know that—what a weird coincidence.

More zombie covers please?

I'll do what I can, I know Charlie likes selling

the original art to covers with zombies on it. Wait until you see the cover to 51—it's AWESOME!

Thanks for listening.
Scott Spencer
UK.

P.S. Kirkman for president

Give it time.

Hello Mr Kirkman!

I like your comic very much, it has the best character development and story of any comic I've read.

I've always loathed superhero comics and grew up with mainly underground comics, heavy metal and 2000AD as a kid so your comic fits me like a latex gimpsuit!

That's what I've always set out to achieve. GREAT mental image...

First and foremost I have to make an ugly confession of a crime for which I have no excuse good enough. I'm stealing your comic through the internet instead of ordering it from America and would probably never have started reading it if I didn't find it on the internet in the first place. Sorry for stealing the food from your baby's mouth! But this makes me think about something, would it perhaps be possible to start buying scans of your comic from your company's site in the future so I could support you without having to pay for overpriced imports? We don't have a local comic book guy either.

I'm currently exploring options for digital comics. It's something I'm very interested in.

Now for some questions, some of which you've probably already answered somewhere. Your letter pages are the first comic letter pages I've ever bothered to read, but I've got memory like a goldfish.

1) Do you guys that work with the book ever decide to make some zombies look like people you don't like in real life?

Not that I'm aware of. Although, Charlie does seem to draw ME as a zombie in almost every issue... so it's a bit unsettling.

2) What are your top 5 favorite supernatural creatures?

Um... Zombies, Werewolves, Vampires, God and

Spider-Man. Heh.

3) Do you sometimes yell at your letters when reading a question from a fan that you've seen at least a hundred times before?

Not often.

4) Do you like mudkips? I like mudkips.

No clue what a mudkip is.

5) Did you play a lot of dungeons and dragons when you were young?

Nope. I've never played it. Tony Moore and I played a lot of Vampire: The Masquerade.

As for comments, uh... I don't really have any, not my biz to tell you how to run your comic. However, I think a very unexpected twist would be if Rick and Tyreese became a gay couple, or if you killed off everyone and the story became all about the governor or if Michonne's other personality became a zombie and she tried to eat people.

I've considered the gay couple thing...

It took me a full sixpack of beer to amount enough courage to write this letter so I'd appreciate it if you decided to print it!

Fakename Obvious
From Schweden

I assume that's what we call over here, "Sweden" right? Unless that's a new country invented by Wayne Campbell?

Hey Kirkman,

I'm loving the series, keep up the amazing character development. In issue 44 the letter section said it's time to go from race to "extreme hatred of religion." I figured I'd write in as I'm someone who strives to follow Jesus (the son of God) but also hates religion. I don't mean to offend anyone, my POV is that Jesus hoped to break down the idea of religion, not start a new one. No matter anyone's belief I figured all fans of the Walking Dead series would be interested in what it says in Matthew 27:52-53 (any translation). It's one of the things most Sunday school classes would skip. Every time I read it, my reaction is always the same: WHAT!?! Enjoy.

Tyler Goodison
London, Ontario

P.S. If you print this thanks for the soapbox. If not, at least I got to point out the scripture to you and to let you know there is one more person in the world who enjoys your work

I don't have a bible... but I do have the internet. Zombies in the Bible. AWESOME.

Dear God of Comics,

THAT'S how you start a letter. Nice.

I just finished issue 44.. I must say, I was very happy with it (except Rick getting shot of course). In the back you mentioned that this would be a story arc to bring us through to issue 48. And that there would be a lot of changes. I can see this possibly going one of two ways (or maybe a way that I just don't anticipate, which is always nice). One, you could have Michonne go out with a small group, or by herself, and slaughter the sadistic leader of the group which could lead to everyone staying at the jail after he is gone. OR, you could have the other group win and everyone have to find a new place to live after they get kicked out of the jail, or worse be entertainment for the others.

Also, I am a HUGE zombie fanatic... and TWD is by far my favorite comic. You have taken the zombie genre to a whole new level. Unfortunately I got into TWD in the 30's. I have been scrambling to buy the back issues, because let's face it, having the trades is nice but the comics you LOVE you want to own the issues individually. So you know, if you have any of those coveted first printing number ones I have a birthday coming up (wink wink).

Heh... I do have every issue, but you know... if I gave them to you—I'd have to share with the whole class.

I also have a question/comment to add before I wrap this up. As you are nearing issue 50, have you thought about a possible end in sight for the book? Or a rough estimate on how many more issues you see in the future? Personally though, I would like to see the book go on for as long as it can.. I don't want it to end any time soon.

I better see this in an issue (hehe j/k),
Jessica Mikesch

I guess now is as good a time as any to update people on the status of this book's life. I just got sales figures for 49, and it's another jump in sales, but we haven't been gaining every

single issue like we did for the first 40 issues or so. We've kind of hit a level, or are only going up slightly... but that's still amazing. If we started losing readers at a slow rate (which is what 99% of comics do) we could probably still make it until 150 before things started looking ugly. So sales-wise we're good. And we're not dropping in sales yet... and our trade paperback collections continue to outsell the majority of Marvel and DC TPBs. The Walking Dead Volume 6 was number 7 on the top 100 graphic novels of 2007 and Volume 7 was number 10. All the other volumes placed on the list, all pretty high as I recall... so we're doing great. Now, as far as I know, Charlie and Cliff are still having a blast, but I won't speak for them.

For me... I can't believe I'm already writing issue 50. That's amazing for me. I feel like I'm writing issue 5, I'm still very jazzed about doing this book, and I see a long, LONG road ahead of me on the series.

Dear Kirkman,

Not much to this issue really. Just...bang, blam, run for your lives! I wouldn't say I didn't enjoy it but, if everything is gonna change soon, then by all means! Wish I had more to say, just, same old same old; and yeah I know my letters haven't been that great recently either.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Yeah, your letters kind of blow, I mean... they're a bit stilted, they only take a second to read, and they don't come in with any kind of regularity. I guess I'll keep reading them. I guess.

Dear Irredeemable Kirk-man,

I enjoy your books. They are good. They are well written and the art is pretty. End of praise.

Questions!

1 - If The Walking Dead was a colour, what would that colour smell like?

What's a "colour?"

2 - A doctor tells you have three days to live, but they will be the best three days of your life - Do you laugh or cry?

Cry.

3 - You are fighting an enraged elephant - how do you win?

Body slam.

4 - If, for whatever reason, TWD becomes the next big thing, how far would you sell out? Would we see Zombie Pez Dispensers? Rick's Hand Lunchboxes? Governor Underroos?

All of the above. And I would also hire some ghost-writer to write the book for me while I retire to my giant money bin to admire my lucky dime. Spats.

5 - Will we ever see colour in between the TWD covers? I'm think a simbolic splash of red or something like that at a major major turning point.

Not interested in doing things like that.

6 - Zombies with guns - when?

Never. Romero's evolving zombies are his spin. Mine just keep rotting.

Up with the good work keep,
Uther Dean

Writing for thanks.

Kirkman-

First of all thanks for reading my previous letter and responding to it. I was excited that you did. Thank you!

Secondly I didn't mean to be confusing in my letter. My boyfriend, Jon, was a soldier training for his second tour in Iraq and passed away from meningitis. I'm sorry if I was misleading I didn't mean to be casual about his death but he always told me if he didn't come home from Iraq alive that I should be prepared to find a zombie at my door one day. When you are afraid for someone all the time, everyday, the only thing that keeps you going is laughter. I didn't mean to be casual because its the most awful thing I've ever dealt with and so many things about it piss me off but I didn't write to unload on you. When you wrote about losing your friend I was thinking of how angry I am too sometimes, I'm angry that I'll never laugh with him again or get to wake up in the mornings snuggled but because of him I still laugh everyday so I try to think of that. I don't know that you will miss the snuggling part so much with your friend, but....well maybe?

Sadly, no. But I guess I can see where you're

coming from. I just can't relate to that. I'm sorry if my response seemed insensitive.

Our humor and love of all things zombie was a big part of us.

Sorry I rambled a lot but while I was excited to see you had responded I was also upset that I was not clear enough in my first letter. I didn't want to fill up your mailbox explaining myself, but I felt like I needed to. Next time I promise to only write in with thought provoking questions and praise for how truly amazing you are.

Well, that's really NOT what I prefer but thanks. Thought provoking questions, yes... but praise about how truly amazing I am falls on deaf ears. I hear that shit all the time from my entourage and bevy of beautiful women who are always hounding me. I'm kind of numb to it now.

Anyways, I really only started to write to you the first time because you liked Passions, I got giddy and the ADD part of me kicked in as I was typing... thinking about zombies makes me think about Jon and thinking about Jon makes me think about zombies....

I understand.

I hope this letter has made a little more sense, if not oh well I can't help it if I'm a little crazy....

Thanks again for everything you guys do.

Brandy

Thanks for writing to explain yourself. I was just a bit confused, so thanks for clearing things up.

BTW- I am upset that Passions was canceled now I don't know what to watch when I have sick days.

Just avoid the daytime talk shows like the plague—those things are crazy. Most any soap opera these days is confusing in the most intriguing ways. I forget which one it was but there was 40 characters, about 8 plots handled between commercial breaks and there was all kinds of shit going on with a long lost dad, a woman at the docks trying to blackmail a dude, a police officer being double-crossed and I think there were aliens.

I've got to admit... if this comic thing ever dries up for me—I really, REALLY would like to write for a soap opera... so if anyone is reading this...

Dear Mr kirkman,

You sir are a FUCKER! I hate you so much, I love you! I can only imagine how many e-mails you are going to receive about this months issue №45. I consider myself a pretty tuff guy but this is tearing me up inside, I can't believe a fucking comic is pulling my strings like this! You KILLED my favorite character or the words exactly “ so I blew her FUCKING brains out “ words can't describe the pain swirling inside my very soul, AHHHHHHHHHHH!

I will always continue to spread the gospel on this amazing book and I hope it never stops,

Robert Flesch,

P.S. and since I got your attention I also love your ultimate x-men Great read there also!

Thanks, glad you like Ultimate X-Men. On the Michonne thing—I can't believe you fell for it! Don't worry—she's okay... for now.

You have a great horror comic book here, you know that, so I won't rant and rave about it. I just have one question. When is the video game? Just to let you know I interviewed a real zombie named Dead Pete. He claims he went to Haiti, dated some girl and then jilted her. Her father a shaman, injected him with something in a nightclub, made him into a zombie slave, and that he worked on a plantation for 6 months, until he got out of his zombie state. He wanted me to personally interview him, but claims he has lesions all over his body. I said, “no, I rather just interview you over the phone.”

Paul Dale Roberts

Good call... and crazy story. Do you have photos? Weird stuff. Video game? Who knows... maybe never. I'm certainly open to the idea.

I swear to fucking god, if you have michonne go out on a punk ass boba fett-esque death with a gunshot to the head, I will fucking scream, and never stop screaming until my goddamn lungs explode and then they'll have to send me issues of the Walking Dead to me in the hospital, lest i aggravate my condition horribly by ruining my newly sutured lungs. Seriously, i'm on fucking pins and needles here Kirkman, your book is too good for my health. Stop putting that heroin into the ink, i know you do, cause i'm sick, and it's bad.

-Adam

She's okay. I promise... no Fett-Death for her.

Dear Kirk-the-Man,

The dialog seemed very stilted this issue, like every character was rattling off a prepared monologue. That said, it wasn't so bad—there were some major happenings. I've seen in Previews that there's an issue where everyone is Dead And Buried...what then, do they all come back as zombies, too? Maybe I never thought to ask but, is this book black and white for any particular reason? Would you produce it in color if you could? I think the one real drawback to black and white is with the hair color...How Lucille Balle ever became famous as a readhead on a black and white show, I'll never know. By the way, this issue I'd rank last out of the four comics I read today.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Well, when we first started out, one of the reasons I made the book black and white was for cost. Not the MAIN reason, or even close to it, but I figured, y'know—if the book is meant to last for a good long time, I could probably make it to issue 25 even if sales were bad if it was black and white. Also, the book has a lot of GORE, in black and white gore is much more acceptable. See Kill Bill. So I figured we might reach a wider audience in black and white.

Also, Night of the Living Dead was black and white... and as mentioned in the Deluxe Hardcover... this book was originally pitched as a Night of the Living Dead comic, because that title is in the public domain.

Now, I could TOTALLY afford to make this book color, but y'know what... it just wouldn't be the same for me. So sorry... no color... ever. The only time I'd ever do it, is if this book came to an end while still successful, and the TPBs were selling huge, but then died out. I'd wait a few years, and then MAYBE... MAYBE do color collections. But I really don't like the idea of seeing the pages in color.

Like usual I had missed comic Wed. for about three or four weeks in a row and by the time I cleaned out my file I have about 40-something books to sort through. But lucky me since I have Buffy, Invincible and TWD mixed in with various X-Men (yes, Ultimate X-Men as well) titles and Initiative and Countdown crap. I have read through almost everything by now and like usual I always find TWD at

the very bottom of the stack. I have finally come to the conclusion that I'm afraid to read this book. Yep, I admit it in plain print. I am a complete pansy when it comes to opening up the cover of this title because thanks to all of your superb characterization I have come to know and love each one of your characters (well, I am kinda glad Carol bit it. She was a complete nutter).

Yeah, she kinda lost it.

As I stare at the cover of issue 44 I am wondering who is gonna make through these pages alive. I was very relieved with what you did with issue 43 because I wasn't sure if I was ready to deal. I know the story must go on, but I don't know if I'm ready to leave the prison behind. I was starting to like it there. It had become my safe haven. Well, Kirkman....wish me luck here. I'm gonna bite the bullet and get this over with. I would rather be getting a root canal than have to read this damn book.

Khicks
Dayton, Ohio

Uh... thanks. I think.

Man,

I just got caught up on Issue №45 and all I can say is what will you throw at us next? Anyone else about to join the ranks of the undead? How long do you think this series will run? I apologize in advance if you've already addressed this in a previous message but I am a relatively new fan. I started in October and just began devouring (no pun intended) TWD.

George

Issue 50 is the last issue. (kidding)

Okay kids, that's all we have time for this month. I'll see you all back here very soon.

Until then!

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hi, Letter Hacks, Amanda here. Issue #48 is a real monkey's paw bargain. The Governor finally gets his... after all this time... but wait, it wasn't supposed to come at this cost, I take it all back! Please! This is a particularly heartbreaking issue, and if you've been following Paolo Rivera's connecting cover set, then I apologize in advance for the tears. That said, I can't think of a more perfect way to end this story arc, even if it does bring the waterworks.

Carl and Rick are on their own next issue, but you've still got us -- Robert and I will be answering new letters to kick off #49, so get those burning questions in now. Until then, we've got classic hacks below, and keep an eye out for our next connecting cover set by the lovely Tula Lotay!

Issue 48—not really much for me to say after this one, other than—I'm glad we finally got to this issue and I can't wait until you guys see where we go from here.

Exciting times.

Hello Robert,

I just wanted to say I'm not one of the fans that has been with you since the beginning. I'm one of the guys that was drawn to your books through- word of mouth.

People always seem to apologize for this. At this point, two thirds of our readership came on after the first six issues of this series—and if you count the trades—there's still people just starting to read the book. It's nothing to apologize for—I think it's awesome. You're here now—that's all that matters.

Invincible is great. We all know it. But the reason I'm writing you is to tell you this. I've been getting TWD in trades. Well, the last trade THE CALM BEFORE vol 7 was SO DAMN GOOD that after reading that I had to pick up the issues. I just couldn't wait another 5-6 months to find out what happens. That's good story telling there and kudos to you.

Thanks for taking the plunge.

No 44 and 45. To say that I'm enjoying these issues is like saying, 'a person *might* need oxygen to live.' They're good stuff.

One other thing. Last year I was rereading my Savage Dragon collection and I saw a letter of yours printed in Savage Dragon 74.

Garland Skowronski

I did in fact have a letter printed in that issue—I believe that's the ONLY letter I've ever had printed in a comic before. I suppose it helps that I already knew Larsen a little bit by that point.

Dear Walking Dead:

Tonight was zombie night for me. After reading The Walking Dead No 45 and wishing that Dale, Glenn and Andrea didn't take off in that RV. Hell, they are needed, what the hell were they thinking? Living people need not wander about, they need to be altogether and fight off these living dead carcasses! Anyway, where was I? Oh ha, after reading this issue, I went to see a good zombie movie called "I Am Legend" with Will Smith. The zombies in this movie are fast moving, not your typical slow moving zombie. There were two sad parts in this movie. When the dog was transforming and Will had to strangle the dog. Then when ~~***deleted because I wouldn't want to spoil things for anyone who hasn't seen the movie***~~. Now that I have read your comic book and saw this outstanding movie, I went ahead and rented 'Plague of the Zombies 1966 - about a voodoo cult in a Cornish village; Psychomania - about some motorcycle riding zombies; Toxic Zombies 1980 - the government sprays marijuana fields with a pesticide that makes the dope farmers become zombies. Yep! It's zombie night, I love dead people!

Paul Dale Roberts

You really picked some winners. Were you on a planet where Day of the Dead had been wiped from existence? Have another Zombie Night and watch Day of the Dead, Shaun of the Dead and Undead... you'll thank me later.

Hey Kirkman,

I just read The Walking Dead 45 and The Astounding Wolf- Man 4 and I think they are up there with some of the best single issues of all time! Plus I had 2 letters printed in Wolf-Man 4. I'm the goon Simpsons guy. I can't believe you went on the net to google something I mentioned,

sweet! Anyway I never thought you and Adlard could top issue 32 but 45 is my fave twd so far. God, I hope that fat guy was lying about killing Michonne, she rules. The scene where Lori was telling Carl about how brave Rick is put a lump in my throat. I really care about these guys. The cover to twd 45 was reminiscent of The Astounding Wolf-Man 4 cover, pretty cool. I love that Dale and Andrea, my girl, have left for a while. I can't wait to see where they go.

1. Any chance Dale and company might run into Duane Jones and his dad? Nice little homage to Ben from notld.

It's possible, but not likely. The problem is it's pretty unrealistic for someone to just stumble upon someone else in this great big world of ours. Rick finding Lori and Carl made sense because he was on the exact same path as them. Finding someone at random—pretty impossible.

2. Tyreese will never break or rat out his friends which can only mean more torture are you worried your setting yourself up for more bullshit racist accusations?

Sure, but it's not going to make me rethink my writing and change things just out of fear of a few letters. That would make the book suck. I've already gotten a bunch of mail for issue 46 (will probably run some later in this column) and so far... I haven't seen any negative response to what happened.

3. I still haven't gotten my twd t-shirt is there a delay?

Not that I'm aware of. They're sitting in stock at the distributor—your retailer has only but to place an order.

Surely you've realized by now a Science Dog comic would sell like hot cakes so when's it coming out? I need a Cory Walker fix. You and Bendis are the future of comics, the quality of your books is amazing. So here's to 2008 being a year full of great Kirkman books.

Happy New Year, pal.

Scott Spencer

For the time being, Science Dog will only be 12-page back-up stories in every 25th issue of Invincible. The next one is coming up on Invincible 50, which should be on sale shortly after this issue is released. Cory and I would both like to do more Science Dog, but his schedule and mine just won't allow it.

The future, Bendis! We're the future!

Hi Kirkman,

The Walking Dead 45 was pure gold. The best

issue yet! I can partly agree with Dale about leaving, I mean, is the prison worth dying over? Then again wherever they set up home they'll always be at risk from desperados unless they trek into some mountains and live off the land Crueso style. Witch I think is a good idea. You can always live off the land especially in America. Saying that, the prison is really well guarded unless they've got tanks—oh wait. God I care about these people. When you've followed this book religiously for a couple years you really share their highs and lows. I was really overjoyed and relieved when Judith was born healthy and not devoured in utero by rotten folk. Also, not knowing if Michonne is alive or dead is killing me. She was always a bit off an outsider in the group, but seeing her come together with the group to fight the Woodbury goons was proof of how great she is. Dale's foolish for putting the kids in a van meters away from the dead and thinking he's saving them. I love the Mad Max 2 element of this book. Man would revert back to beastly basics ready to wage war for a tank of gas or your digs. Hershel is delusional after all his suffering. He still thinks there's a beardy twat in the sky looking out for him. Sorry, I despise religion. I blame it for every war man has fought. TWD is the one book I can't live without so keep 'em coming.

Scott Spencer

Thanks for writing in Scott—wow, two letters in a row. I can't help but get the sense that your two letters still haven't quite covered all your thoughts—you think maybe, oh wait—okay...

Hi Kirkman,

I think The Walking Dead is about to get crazy I've thought about how fucking huge and epic it would be if an issue ended with a radio transmission from a government or army official and I realized how truly special this book is. Its way bigger than just some creator owned indie comic. I believe you're on par with Romero. What I'd give to see you two collaborate on a project!

Hey—me too. All George has to do is call.

1. Have you seen diary of the dead yet? I'm counting the days.

I have not. It's not playing in my area yet—but as soon as it is—I'll be sure to check it out.

One numbered question, huh? You're getting lazy.

Adlard's covers are smoking! I love the red colours used for the war arc please let Tyreese survive being beheaded saying that his balls seemed to be in Michonne's handbag in 45. Michonne says jump, Tyreese says "how high?"

TWD rules the comic world.

Scott Spencer

Yeah, I guess Tyreese was a bit neutered in his last scenes—but Michonne is just that strong-willed a person... and Tyreese was a bit out of his element. You done writing letters now? Oh... nevermind.

Hi Kirkman,

I just saw the cover to TWD 49, and it smokes! It's gotta be one of my favorites. Carl really is a tough little survivor. I suppose it's akin to children in warzones, death all around, literally for Carl. I suppose you'd become numb to the violence. He's had to grow up fast and poor Judith, a childhood is out of the question!

Yeah—no kidding.

At least Rick and company can take comfort in their memories Judith's first sounds were a saw hacking through bone and screams. It makes me think of the Terminator mythos and kids that were born after the machines had taken over. I'm not sure I like your vision for the future of this book. You know, a couple of survivors in a cabin where they hardly ever see a zombie. It's like you've gone off zombie action. I mean, soap stuffs cool and all but only because they're surviving a zombie haulocaust.

Don't worry—there will be more zombies in the book movie ahead then there probably has ever been. People should be pleased.

1. Have these guys ever debated why this is happening? That's what's so good about Dawn of the Dead.

There will certainly be more talk of "why" coming up. I'm not saying they'll find the answers—but there's going to be questions asked. It still hasn't even been a year yet in the book—and they've been spending the time up to this point just dealing with the crisis—trying to stay alive. Once they're over the initial shock—they'll be looking for answers... at least more than they have been.

2. Is Alice gonna tie up any more zombies after what happened to Carol?

Probably not... obviously (after reading this issue).

You did say you're not gonna reveal the cause and I like it that way. Marvel Zombies rules. I think it's a huge turning point in Marvel's history.

Hopefully a POSITIVE turning point in history. We'll see.

Having Captain America's rotting brain put in to the corpse of a black man was sweet. And

the covers smoke! You and Bendis are the Kirby and Lee of my generation! Brubaker's no slouch either. I started reading Daredevil and Captain America recently.

We're Lee and Kirby but neither of us draw (well)? That doesn't make sense. Can't Bendis and Bagley be Lee and Kirby? I'll be Alan Moore, if you don't mind. Brubaker can be Claremont.

3. Are the t-shirts delayed I still haven't gotten my TWD tee?

I hope you've gotten it by now. If not, you need to make sure your retailer ordered it for you. I don't know what the delay could be.

Here's to the Governor getting wasted soon.

Scott Spencer

Your toast is my command. Governor got wasted in this very issue!

Mr. Kirkman,

I just spent a weekend catching up with some reading, and at one point it became 'zombie time'. While I still collect every TWD as it comes out, this was the first time I read all 7 trades in one sitting. It finally dawned on me at one point that there have been more deaths to this group since they've reached the 'sanctuary' of the prison, than prior to getting there.

Well, it is important to note that they were out of the prison from issues 1 to 12, and in the prison from 13 to 48... so it's only logical there would be more deaths in that time. Deaths from zombie attacks? Not so much, I don't think...

I guess similar to all Romero themed stories, the real 'bad guys' of TWD are those who still have a pulse. In my opinion that's what truly makes a zombie story scary.

Well, adversaries who can think would always pose more of a threat.

Now getting back to my reading. Upon completion of TWD, I moved on to a story by Brian Keene called Dead Sea. It was a pretty good read, and I was floored to find out that he makes at least two references to The Walking Dead! I guess this means you've officially become 'pop culture'! Congratulations, and keep up the great storyline!

Aloha,
Gordon Fernandez

Yeah, I've been hearing a lot about Dead Sea by Brian Keene, I really would like to read it, so I'm sure I'll buy it eventually and read the first 80 pages and then never get back to it, despite how much I

enjoy it, like I've done with every novel I've tried to read in the last two years.

I've still got to read World War Z.

Anyway, I'm super flattered that Brian Keene used the comics in his book. That's' very, VERY cool.

Mr. Kirkman,

Hello.

I just finished Walking Dead №45, and I continue to enjoy your storyline. I was surprised that Alice seems to now be able to perform trauma surgery. I am sure there is more to her character and expertise than what is explicitly revealed in the panels, but this seemed to be a bit of a stretch for me. I realize that Hershel has some surgical veterinary experience and probably lent a hand, but I had assumed that being gut shot meant Rick was getting written out.

Oh, ye of little faith! It's not overly explained in the series but Alice is pretty much a genius, who can just read books and do the things she reads about. She's almost completely self-taught and can do a whole range of different medical procedures now—or rather, she could. And Hershel helped her a bit on top of that.

I also had a request. How about a collection of the cover pages? The art is great and it does not seem to make it into the trade paperbacks.

Happy New Year,
Dave Miller

That will be published eventually... possibly very soon.

Robert,

I have been a comic book collector since 1977. I have seen comics come and go. I have collected through the good times and the bad. I recently, I was talking with a guy at the place where I get my comics (Jester's Playhouse in Northfield NJ) and we were discussing the current state of comics. Being an "old school" collector, I find that the big two (Marvel and DC) have lost all respect for the comic collector with the Death of Steve Rogers and ruining Spider-Man in more ways than I care to get into. And DC taking great stories like Identity Crisis and bleeding it 'til it screams "STOP!" I have lost a lot of the love that I had for the hobby. Marvel's Ultimate series is something that I term "A Really Bad Idea Done Really Well!"

Then I was told about the "best comic on the

market"... The Walking Dead. Sure, okay. After talking about it, and I do love zombies, I thought, "okay, I'll try the first trade." It was pretty good. Very interesting. Nice Character development. I'll give the second one a try. After reading that, I bought all seven trades en mass plus issues 43-45. I just finished №45. I couldn't put them down. I tried to finish the newest DUNE book before i got into it, but the WALKING DEAD was so riveting that I couldn't put it down. As much as I love zombies, I thought it was going to get old with issue after issue of zombies eating people. The post apocalyptic zombie infestation is more of a setting than what the actual book is about. It's just awesome. Sadly, I now have to wait for mere monthly installments.

I posted a review on my blog. Hopefully, it will attract more readers. In it, I mentioned that this would be the perfect show to put HBO back on the map.

Don't I know it...

The only negative that I can say about this book is that I forgot what it was like to be this excited about collecting comics. When the next issue comes out, I will be so happy that I'll probably read it in the car. Only POWERS comes close to this book.

Yeah, but how close does it actually come? Not very—right? RIGHT?!

The WALKING DEAD is my new favorite comic book. At 45 issues it has held up more than Y: The Last Man has, which was a great book, but lost steam after a while.

Keep up the good work.and Thanks!

Kevin Dillon

No, thank you for the kind words, sir.

Dear Mr. Kirkman:

TWD has made its way into Spain and we at our drawing academy are totally delighted at it. I personally am completely hooked to it. Let's start with some comments: The series are taking place during 2004-05 right? So, where's the Internet gone? I feel quite down because in about 40 issues there have been no reference at all to telecommunication networks.

Yeah, I chose pretty early on to ignore that for at least the initial stuff. I figured most of those attempts would have been made when Rick was in a coma... and by the time he woke up, people had given up. I'm sure Axel spent a bit of time on the prison computer Googling that woman from the HITMAN movie—we all have.

I mean, even an amateur radio operator properly motivated by a biter (sounds weird in spanish: “mordedores”) apocalypse could set up a working trick radio emitter or WiFi hotspot properly configured for broadcasting and there haven’t been any.

Maybe all those guys capable of that got eaten—who knows.

When I saw the Christmas episode with the game console I thought that would be it, but it wasn’t. And when the characters got to the city and then to the NG station I thought “This is going to be it: they will find a PC or internet console or whatever” But... you now. Many of my generation would be very delighted at the introduction of a new character the “hacker/computer geek” type who could manage to communicate with people from Atlanta or elsewhere. Maybe the little kid who got his present for Chrsitmas, maybe a new character. This would be a completely new unseen episode in any zombie-related stories I can name, and I think know quite a lot. I am not talking about some Umbrella supercorporation, for god’s sake, no. Just a simple, normal, common day use internet user.

I imagine it would be pretty boring for the characters to sit in a chat room online for even five pages of an issue. It’s just not practical for a comic, in my opinion.

And by the way: what has been done to the GSM network? Any walking dead in AT&T or Telefonica uniform wandering around? hehe... that’d be cool. I am not going to start bullshitting you about racial issues but IMHO the hispanic died too quickly; he was a good, character with a developed background. I can’t believe Rick did not take him back to the infirmary after running over him while driving the van.

Sorry about that. I did regret that Martinez had to go like he did. That was the characters arc—and it was unfortunate that he happened to be the only Hispanic in the book. There will be more... eventually.

There is another character who may play a main role: the woman who complains at the Governor’s massacre. She could well become the next governor of a matriarcate or something like that. Congratulations for this amazing piece of art. Keep it coming!

Alfonso

Thanks for writing, I’ll do my best to keep things entertaining.

Hey,

I could go on and on about how great your writing is or how fantastic the books you write are and even tell you that I read practically everything you write. But I won’t.

Cya,
Adam Davis

Well then, I’m not going to print your letter. So we’re even.

Dear Mr. Kirk-Man

I was just wondering if Carl is named after Carl Winslow?

Dimitri Vastardis

No, although I do share a love for Family Matters with my good friend Cory Walker, although I would consider his love to be more of an unhealthy obsession, but that’s just how I see things.

No, Carl is named after my father. I also thought it was a unique name for a child these days. I pushed for it for my own son but my wife hated it—so we went another way.

Okay... so there you go... issue 48 in the can. On to issue 49, which should be in stores shortly, a month or less—but y’know... no promises.

See you then!

—Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, readers! Amanda here. We're at the start of our next story arc, which means Robert and I are answering some new letters! We're now a quarter of the way through this run of Deluxe... how time flies when you're on that bi-weekly publishing schedule. We'll get into letters in just a minute, but a new arc also means we've also got another connecting cover set coming your way — this time by the fabulous Tula Lotay! All of these cover series have had different looks and feels, it's been very fun to see what each artist brings to the table in their unique way, it's always something new.

Indeed! I've loved all of them so far and Tula's work is no exception! I've been an admirer of her work since she did Supreme: Blue Rose with Warren Ellis. This is the first time a cover of hers has graced THE WALKING DEAD and I couldn't be more thrilled!

Speaking of thrilled, I'm back to answer more TWD mail! WOO HOO! Let's dive in!

Dear Kirk-Man,

This will be my 4th maybe even 5th time reading this series. It is still my first choice on top of my pull list when it is released twice a month. Not many stories could keep me entertained after so many repeat readings

My identical Twin brother Jonathan first introduced me to the series in 2009 when he was in basic training for the military. He passed away in November 2021. His death has been difficult to bear. This comic is one of the few things that genuinely make me happy. The color has added a whole new depth for the book that has made it just as exciting as the first time experiencing it.

Thank you for all you do. This book reminds me of my brother and all the wonderful memories I have with him.

Erick M. Shafer

Really sorry for your loss, Erick. But I'm glad you have this to remember your brother. We're not stopping anytime soon.

It's never easy to hear about tragedy in people's lives. Like most, I definitely spend all my time trying to pretend these things don't happen, which makes me ill prepared when they inevitably do. It brings me comfort to think that this series helps anyone in this way, so thank you for sharing, Erick.

I know it's not easy to lose a loved one, but I can't imagine what it's like losing a twin. As Amanda says, this book will be here for you for a while, but I hope it gives you the time needed to find happiness elsewhere.

Sadly, I'd guess we all need to work a little harder on finding, and holding onto, things that make us happy. Especially after these last few years. I know I certainly do.

Hey Kirkman,

I have been a big fan of the series for most of my life. I first encountered the walking dead through the games and have been a fan since. I love this world and have a few questions about the future of the franchise.

1) Will you ever reconsider collecting the deluxe issues into collected versions. I would love to see some panels in great colored quality in a big hardcover book.

If I've learned one thing from these Letter Hacks, it's that there's ALWAYS the possibility.

And yet, I promise any form of collected edition of this run is very far away on the horizon.

2) Will you ever continue Negan Lives. It seems like theres a lot more to his story that could be expanded on through Negan lives. Plus everyone loves Negan so im sure everyone will buy it.

Everyone buying it certainly isn't a concern. There is a lot of Negan story to be told there, but in a way, it's already partially told. I like the idea of readers having the beginning and the end (at least vaguely with what's hinted at in #193) so they can figure it out on their own. I wouldn't say "never" when it comes to more Negan but there are currently no plans. I don't think it's a bad thing to have a break in new Walking Dead stories. And don't forget Tillie Walden's CLEMENTINE trilogy is very much underway! So there's still some new TWD stuff out there!

3) Have you ever considered creating a spinoff comic similar to Fear the Walking Dead but with your own newly created characters in a comic form.

No. I prefer to do something completely different, like the aforementioned CLEMENTINE.

4) Will we get more spinoffs like the alien. I would buy every single one if you did that.

It's possible!!

From
Coen R

Thanks for writing in, Coen!

Hey there Kirkman and gang!

With The Walking Dead being "dead" for three years now (please bring it back from the dead like a zombie...please?), looking back, what were some of your favorite pieces of memorabilia? I imagine the hype for things like that may not be as appealing to you as it is to us fans...but I know you are a big collector of Transformers (big props to you!). So any TWD collectibles that stuck out to you?

There's so much it's hard to really narrow it down. I do love the statues that McFarlane did based on the comics. The RICK, MICHONNE, NEGAN and EZEKIEL (w/Shiva) statues are so amazing it's hard to put them into words.

And even though the comic has been finished and the TV show now about to wrap up...will we ever see any form of figure or collectibles again? Diamond Select is doing Invincible figures, is there any chance they will ever do a small batch of figures? Funko Pops? Anything?

I wouldn't rule it out.

Thanks for reading!

P.S - You aren't a hack...does that make me a cool fan? ;)

Nice try trying to suck up to us...

Matthew and Elsie Short
Monterey, Tennessee

Hello, Robert!

Yes, we are reading your Cutting Room Floor section, and we are happy for it. I actually made a translated version for our TWD page in Czech language, and it has some 40 views every time (the "cool" fans). BUT, we were expecting something more interesting. Honestly, it's usually quite boring. We were expecting some interesting information, like why did you choose to kill Carol this way and not some other way, or why did you decide to kill Allen, or why is the Governor looking like Danny Trejo? I think I read once that you named him Phillip after a bully that picked on you in school (or it was a hoax, I don't know where I read it anymore). Those are interesting things. And maybe there could be some original Charlie's drawings?

Anyway, don't stop with it, WE ARE READING IT!
Your Czech and Slovak fans community.

BORING?! BORING?! Well... I... I mean... I... wow. Okay. Boring? Sheesh. I do talk about why I kill characters and how I kill characters and what changed about the deaths of characters when those things are pertinent. Sometimes things happened according to plan so there isn't any variation that I can discuss, sadly.

Philip was a mean kid in my elementary school. He didn't pick on me regularly but yeah, he was a kid I would avoid. So sorry to any Philip's out there but I've always associated that name with jerks!! And the Governor is the ultimate jerk, so the name fit.

Was that less boring?

I mean, I guess if you're not a budding writer some of my critiques and comments on my own work and discussion of the process can be... pretty boring... but some people LIKE that stuff... I swear. I think? Maybe?

Howdy

As a kid I would hear my parents and their friends talk about this show “The Walking Dead” Something terrible happening to a horse, people going from a farm to a prison. When I was old enough I began to watch the show on my own and later, after seeing it was based on a comic I got all the compendiums (big commitment considering I hadn’t even read the first issue, but I liked the show so the comics were probably just as good) . I paused the show to read the entire series, turns out I just got into the series only a year after the final issue came out so I couldn’t keep up with it as it came out issue by issue.

My friend then gave me issues 2 and 3 of TWD Deluxe. After reading them I had to do a double take to see if the compendiums were also in color. After realizing this was something new I immediately bought all the issues of the deluxe currently out and I can’t wait for more to come out.

The first issue of the original series came out before I was born so I’m excited to be alive at a time where I can collect the series as it comes out.

Thanks for writing the best comic ever :)

Jill

Oh, no, Jill. You’ve committed the cardinal sin of making ME feel old, so it’s only out of the kindness of my not-yet-jaded heart that I’m grabbing this letter. But, really, always happy to have new fans on this train.

Oh, great job, Amanda. The way you capitalized “ME” made ME feel DOUBLY old!! Anyway, Jill! Welcome aboard. It’s so great to hear that a young fan can be diving into this book in its current form and enjoying the series in the esteemed Mister McCaig’s full color!

Hey! First time writing into Letter Hacks! I’ve been reading this comic since I was 10, 22 now. (23 by the time this releases) 12 Years! Just wanted to ask if you have any plans to do any more one-off issues? Thanks!

-Brock Martinez

Ugh, Brock. Same to you.

Make it stop!! Brock, I promise we’ll have another one-off issue out before your first born is in college.

Dear Robert

First of all, many thanks for TWD. I’ve been on board since the very beginning way back in the mists of the early 2000s and have loved every iteration so far, whether it be novels, TV, Xbox games or the actual comic book!

You posited the question in a recent Cutting Room Floor as to whether anyone actually reads them, so I’m happy to tell you that not only do I read them, but that they were the main reason that I started picking up TWD Deluxe. When the deluxe treatment was announced I did pause for a moment and think, “Do I really need another copy of this?”, having picked up the original issues and then the hardcover collections, but once I knew you’d be giving us the Cutting Room Floor insights I was in, and will be to the end (again)!

Anyway, I’ll keep this short to make room for other letters, but if it gets printed it will make my day!

Cheers
Richard Cosgrove
Colchester, UK

I do like making people’s days. And as I stare at my collection of Saga single issues, trade paperback, hardcovers, and one compendium I also think, “How did I get here?” so I feel you, Richard.

For me it’s the work of Frank Miller. I think I have nearly every single printed form of almost everything he’s ever done. So many versions of SIN CITY and ELEKTRA LIVES AGAIN (and those all look almost identical!!).

Ah... comics.

That’s all we have for these latest and greatest letters, but we’ll be back in six issues’ time to answer more new mail! Before I leave you though, we’ll have a lot of awesome art on stands for the momentous Issue #50 – another NEW Charlie Adlard cover, Tonci Zonjic, Andy Kubert, and more of our fabulous others, so be sure to check those out. Until next

time, here's a few classic hacks to fill up the rest of this dang space!

-Amanda LaFranco

Well, this issue is a bit of a change of pace from previous issues, I hope you've all enjoyed it.

Kind of crunched for time right now--so let's just jump feet first into the ol' mailbag.

Yo Kirkman,

I got into TWD about six months ago and initially thought "what the hell, it's black and white. This isn't the 20's" but after picking up issues №7-41 (№1-6 are impossible to find thusly insanely expensive), I couldn't imagine it in color. It would take away from its gritty realism. Now it's my favorite book on the shelf. I've even gotten my friend into TWD who previously scoffed anything comics.

Anyway, this is my first time writing to a letters column and I just wanted to let you know that I just finished reading issue №46 and it ... was ... AWESOME!

Not to sound like some sick bastard, Governor wannabe, but Tyreese getting his head hacked off was too cool. It was definitely worth the wait. I like Tyreese and everything but when I saw the cover I thought "he's not gonna kill him," then you did, it was real and that's what I love about the series. No one is spared. Though if anything happens to Lori, Carl or Judy as the cover of issue №47 depicts, I'm gonna be seriously pissed (I'll still read since it would drive Rick over the edge and shit would hit the TWD fan and that would be awesome) but I'll totally be mad at you.

Heh--skip issue 48!

So you, Rad-Ad and Spiff-Cliff keep up the good work and my stupid roommate and I'll keep reading the best book out there. Oh yeah, and kill that Governor asshole.

Later,
Dave Hodge

Governor dead? Check!

Mr. Kirkman,

This is actually the first letter I've written to TWD.. or any comic for that matter, but the events of №46 forced my hand. I mean, I know this arc is called 'no one is safe' but that doesn't lessen the blow. Tyreese will be missed. He's been one of my favorite characters since he was introduced.

As brutal as it was, the thing that struck me the most was how honest the cover art was. We've all been guessing on the forums and such, but I don't think any of us really thought Tyreese would die in the issue with the cover where it looked like he was going to die. What a mindf*ck! Trick us with the truth. I love it. It just makes me nervous about №47.. poor Lori and Judy. The fence looks like it's seen better days too.

Alan

PS. Please don't kill Axel! If you must.. I hope he goes out with a bang, Uncommon Valor style. Gene Hackman kicks ass.

Yeah, the biggest casualty in the series so far--the fence! I wanted Axel's death to be pretty abrupt and final... like things would be in real life. No speech, no moment of heroism or sacrifice... just a sound and a fallen body. Probably didn't live up to what you wanted... but most deaths wouldn't in real life. Not many people really get to go out in a grand style.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Thank you for such an incredible series. I love that TWD explores the ways in which different people react to living in a world that's drastically different from what they're used to. I've gotten so attached to the characters, and in issue 46 I realized something about Rick that I hadn't fully appreciated before--his iron will. Here he is, with a missing hand, using crutches, and yet still fully focused on survival. As the Governor hacks off Tyreese's head, the others turn their heads away or try to cover their eyes, but Rick stays facing forward and stands perfectly still. I love that his eyes are covered in shadows in that panel-- we don't know if he's closing his eyes or if he's watching the Governor, and the shadows make him look emotionally

deadened, just for that moment. My guess is that Rick's watching the Governor-- as awful as it is, someone needs to be watching the Governor, to see what he does next.

I'm so glad that Michonne is still alive and fighting! Please, please don't kill her off for a long time! I'd really like to learn more about her past. She just fascinates me. I disagree with the fans who think that your pacing is too slow. I love all of the background information and all of the attention that you give to developing the characters.

Thanks, in return, Michonne is alive... for now.

When I saw the preview for the next issue, I yelled! Not Lori and the baby! I often gasp or exclaim out loud while I'm reading TWD, I'm just so into the story! When my husband hears me, he knows there's no fire-- I'm just devouring the latest issue of TWD. :)

Thanks for a great series-- I'll be reading it and re-reading it for years to come.

Jeanne-Marie

Thanks a lot. Maybe I'm just now noticing, or maybe things really are picking up--but the female readership seems to be growing... and that makes me happy. Ladies seem to be a bit more discerning to me when it comes to entertainment... so I take it as a huge compliment. Thanks for writing Jeanne-Marie.

So Tyreese bites it, and not even by a zombie. That's kinda' shitty. Actually, this is really upsetting. I know "no one is safe", blah, blah, blah, people die in zombie books, but to get it from a crazy cock-sucker, like the Governor (who really should be dead) is just fucked. I just hope Michonne goes all Pam Grier on his mutherfuckin' ass. Don't puss-out on this one Kirkman!

Oh, yeah, love the book. Keep writtin'.

Dave

Well, The Governor is dead now... but again, I thought it was a bit too unrealistic to have Rick or Michonne do the deed... a little too clean story-wise. I suppose I should wait until letters come in for issue 48 to reply to all this stuff...

This is a first for me. Never written to one of you funny book guys before, but you finally made me do it, you killed off Tyrese, fuck me rigid didn't think you'd do it. He'd become one of my favorite characters in the series and you offed him. After the zombie necking I guess I should of realized you weren't pulling any punches but damn. I got into your book after telling a friend who was just getting into comics about Bendis, he returned the favor by telling about some fella named Kirkman, I grabbed the first trade and was hooked, immediately getting the rest of the trades and looking into this Invincible thing and some li'l book called Battle Pope.

Congratulations sir you've created some of the best mythology anyone's come up with in years. I was even able to get my girlfriend into Dead, the first comics she's ever been interested in.

You're a worthy heir to Romero in the canons of zombie storytelling, thank you and keep up the amazing work.

-Ivan

p.s. Ignore all the whiny bastards complaints about pacing, after years of dealing with the big boys dragging shit out until the next big crossover and then letting us down with a minor character death or surprise resurrection, your willingness to kill of characters we truly feel invested in is a heart wrenching welcome, keep making me mourn.

Damn it, I wish I could go one letters column without Bendis getting mentioned. I know he spends hours scanning these things to see if his name is mentioned... it's almost the only thing he lives for these days. It's so sad. I mean, I guess if it makes the guy happy... but whatever.

As far as the pacing comments go. I do read the criticism and take it to heart but I just do what I want for the most part. It's hard to take the criticism seriously when sales are still going up.

Hello,

I just recently got into your book, and I've got to say it's one of the most compelling

I've read, but I'm sure you're sick of hearing that. I'm always imagining how a zombie outbreak would go down here in Tokyo. Anyway, I was just wondering why wasn't Otis buried along with Carol and Allen? I noticed at the funeral for Carol there were only two burial plots. Although he was just a minor character, he seemed to have spent enough time with group to warrant a proper burial rather than being burned with the rest of the biters. He wasn't that much of a prick, was he?

Hell, they used to let him watch the kids.

Anyway, keep up the good work, sucks about Tyreese, can't wait to see what happens next.

Joey Jamir

Otis wasn't buried because he didn't have much left of him and didn't die at a time when the burying would have been easy to do. There were tons of zombies to clean up... and Otis was a zombie... Allen and Carol weren't zombies.

Dear Mr. Kirkman.

Having Just read issue 46 of The Walking Dead, I have to say, wow! Just when i think things are calming down for the characters of this book, something like this happens and i am blown away. I had to re-read the sequence detailing the execution of Tyreese four or five times. I could not believe what i was seeing and am still in a state of shock and disbelief.

Never, has a work of fiction caught me so off guard. Never.

Well done, The Walking Dead will always have a place in my heart, albeit a very dark, sinister place.

Sincerely, Alan Marsh.

P.S. I hope Michonne guts the Governor and feeds him his remaining eye.

Sorry to disappoint you on the governor thing.

Hello,

I don't care if this gets printed or not. I

would just like to say that I feel you handled Tyreese's death with class. I loved that character and I was pained to see him go as he was my favorite character besides Rick. Ironically my first letter to be printed in a book was in №46 with Tyreese bein' dead and all. So yes you made me both sad and happy in the same issue. That's why I love this book. Despite what anybody says it's flawless. Keep up the outstanding work sir.

May the dead keep walking,

Adam Davis

Yay--happiness and sadness... my bread and butter.

Greetings Robert,

It's writers such as yourself that give hope to writers such as myself. I left comic books 'for good' during the speculative era a decade and a half ago because, for the most part, what was on the shelves sucked. Flash covers and bloated cross-overs had bled all creativity from the entertainment medium I most loved, so I just stopped reading. Most did eventually and the rest is history.

You, sir, I think are 80% responsible for bringing me back into the fold. While I kept on reading my old stuff from the Silver age to around 1992, I had not read anything "new" since around 1993 or 94. A friend slipped me some of Brubaker's Cap re-launch and I loved it. Then I walked into a comic shop called Nostalgia Newsstand during a brief stay in North Carolina and asked the guy behind the desk to recommend me the absolute best written series out today. "That's WALKING DEAD, sir." I bought trade №1 and after reading it drove back the next day and bought every trade available at the time. That evening I started reading and did not stop until I had finished. Soon after I snagged issue №0 of INVINCIBLE and said, OK, I am already hooked and bought your stupendously huge and expensive Hardcover of the first 24 issues. I read it in one sitting (God, my ass hurt from that). Yeah, I wished I had not read №0 because I knew the big twist, but it still rocked something fierce.

Since then I have not looked back. While my starving writer budget will not allow for a huge reading list, there is no doubt WD and INVINCIBLE are my two favorites. Your

writing, pacing, building of suspense and richness of characters is a thing of beauty. It's given me the kick in the ass I needed to pursue a lifelong dream and create my own comic book(s). After months of hard work I am now talking to two different publishers about two of my would be projects and it is very exciting. Even if it doesn't happen this time, it will eventually because I have found my groove. So thanks for that.

Congratulations, sir!

Now let me ask you some silly questions and make a few WD related comments.

1. I sold my trades for WD in bulk figuring I'd buy the hardcovers. Grabbed the signed V2 and V3 on sale the other day, though they were sold out of №1. The price jump from V2 to V3 was 100%! What the heck was up with that? \$30 to \$60? Did paper go up that much? Please tell me V4 is not \$120! Yowzer! Forgive me if this has been addressed before. If so, just ignore me.

The signed edition of the V2 HC was also \$60 but the price was not printed on the actual book, it was a sticker. The \$30 price was printed on the book under the sticker... it's a long story. The smaller hardcovers will always have a \$30 regular edition and \$60 signed edition.

2. There is no need to go into the origins of why the world went all zombie. That's not the central story. Ignore those who ask.

Great question!

3. People keep talking about a movie or television adaptation. A movie won't do it. Your story is far too complex for a 2 hour cliff-notes version. It would not do your work justice. Frankly, the only route I see is an HBO or Showtime series, which would allow for no pulled punches. Both networks are damned near putting porn onto their broadcast signal. The violence allowed is way beyond an MPAA sanctioned R. Ever see ROME? Good Lord. You'd be able to tell your story in all of its glory because no way could you do it on free broadcast Network television! Fact is, done right the show could run for years. But I know how difficult it is to get such deals and the politics involved. Good luck.

We have come close... but obviously haven't quite gotten there yet.

4. I think it's time you had a guest appearance from Spawn or perhaps Cerebus. Just kidding. :-)

Hah.

5. The continued killing off major characters is welcome. Have you ever considered that maybe one or two characters are so popular with readers that killing them would result in a huge drop-off of readers? That kind of thing can happen. If you killed off our fearless one-handed leader, well, good luck with that because it would be brutal. Fans at conventions would come after you with their pitch forks and torches.

Kindest regards,
Matt S.

We'll see... er.

Hey Kirkman,

I'm long time fan of the walking dead and I'm really sad to see Tyreese go. His passing was well in line with the other characters in the series and I love how you do not give preferential or detrimental treatment to minority characters. That said, we are down to two prominent minority characters, and by the time this letter is printed there may be none left. If I'm not mistaken, the prison is somewhere near Atlanta, Georgia. The population of the state is 39% minority, and that is not reflected in your story. I think that if roughly 2/5ths of a region is affected by a zombie apocalypse are minorities, roughly 2/5ths of the survivors would be minority. I love your series, and will continue to be a fan, but give me a fucking break, we need more color in the story.

-Luis

You'll have it, sir! Scout's honor.

Okay, another one down... next up, issue 50. WOO HOO! See you then.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, readers. Amanda here, and we've done it, made it to the big 5-0! This issue doesn't have the biggest action we've seen or the craziest cliffhanger -- but it's very much a pivotal character point for Carl growing up. It's quieter than maybe you'd expect for a milestone issue, and I love it. We've got a slew of special covers for this issue as well, so if you're looking for something new, check out the next cover in Tula Lotay's connecting set, a NEW wraparound cover from Charlie Adlard, another incredible and colorful cover from Julian Totino Tedesco, and a pair of iconic ones from Tonči Zonjić and Andy Kubert & Brad Anderson. We'll also have a very special foil edition of Charlie and Dave's recolored original #50 cover available for Local Comic Shop Day on November 23rd. Maybe pay your local comic shop a visit and say hi from us! Until we return, enjoy some of these classic Letter Hacks.

Okay, kids... that's issue 50. Issue 50. Fifty. Fif-ty. Half-way to issue one hundred. Fifty damn issues.

Fifty.

I don't know, I'm a little awestruck to be honest. I'm not going to say I never thought we'd make it this far, because honestly, after the sales jump between issues #6 and #7 I kinda knew we'd be around for a good long while.

As for a little update on the strength of this book... this is by far the highest selling issue of the series, which is way cool and means we're pretty strong. That said, we got an unrealistic bump in sales for this issue because of our first ever variant cover by Erik Larsen and Ryan Ottley. So this issue really shouldn't count. But I've already got sales figures for issues 51 and 52 and I'm glad to report that issue 51 sold better than 49 and issue 52 is our highest selling issue yet, not counting issue 50.

So yeah, sales are still going up, little by little, every month. Even now.

Which I don't say to brag, I really don't. A lot of you weren't around in the early days of this

series. Early on I would report on how the book was doing as a way of reassuring readers that the book wasn't going to get cancelled at any point in the near future. I know what it's like trying new books. Even if you love something and it's a great book--things don't catch on sometimes. It gets old after a while trying new things only to have them cancelled just when they start to get good.

It's frustrating.

That's why I let people know, this book is doing well, sales are strong... better than ever.

And y'know, I don't think I'll ever be able to accurately convey just how thankful I am to each and every one of you for making this possible. I mean, I wouldn't be here if it weren't for you guys. All of you. I wish I could fly to all your houses and give you hugs. This book is a huge deal for me. I'm so grateful that you guys and gals enjoy it.

And I'm enjoying it, too. I love working on this series. I plan on sticking with this book for years and years. And a huge part of that is the people I get to work with. Charlie Adlard, Cliff Rathburn and Rus Wooton make this book an absolute joy to work on.

Charlie, Cliff and Rus know how much I love them, so I'm not going to bore anyone with lengthy thank yous. Instead, I'm going to dive right into the mail. I don't think this is the longest letters column ever (although it might be) but it's certainly the longest I've done recently.

So here we go!

Mr. Kirkman,

I've been reading comics for many years but up until I picked up The Walking Dead I was never impressed enough to actually write in about them. Congratulations sir you are my first letter (and will completely flip out and frame the issue if said letter is printed just because I'm a nerd like that haha).

Better go buy a frame!

Truth be told I was really getting bored with comic books and about to stop buying them all together. That all changed when I went into the comic shop and my eyes fell onto TWD volume 1. The whole cover with just the right amount of color along with the black and white drawing with awesome artwork caught my eye almost immediately (not to mention it had zombies!). My first words were "whoa, what is this?" The comic shop owner went "Awesome series man, you've got to try it out" Keep in mind I was about to call it quits on comic books so I was skeptical but decided to take the gamble, handed over the 10 bucks and went on my way. On my way home I decided to thumb through the book and I was hooked immediately. As soon as the train stopped I turned around and took another 30 minute ride back into downtown Chicago and bought all the other Walking Dead issues I could find.

The whole series is just a masterpiece in my eyes. The language and color reflect the world perfectly and you've shown that you're not afraid to put some lumps (or bite marks) on the main characters.

You say "no one lives forever in this series" but you write it so well that we feel like we know the characters and understand them and then our jaw drops when one of them gets done in. I know that when Tyreese got killed I was totally shocked and then was like WHY ROBERT WHY??? WE JUST LOST TYREESE! when Axel went down. Those 2 were my favorites of the gang honestly. I just hope you spare Hershel at least for awhile longer, though I suspect with how things are going he's going to meet some untimely demise sooner rather than later. With that being said I think you can tell I think your book is AMAZING. It's rare to find a book with good art, a solid story, and the ability to get you to care about the characters but you pull it off flawlessly.

Ok, whew, I've gotten that off my chest and have a few questions that you hopefully have time to answer.

1) Are there any plans to have what's left of the gang meet up with some new people? I know a lot of readers are asking about Duane and Morgan but I'd be content with anyone since the current crew is getting knocked off pretty regularly.

There will always be new characters coming into the fold in this series from time to time... just go online and look at the cover for issue 53. There's more on the way very soon.

2) Are there any plans for some other random Walking Dead goodies? I found a shirt at the comic shop and seen the poster on the back of issue, was just wondering if there were any plans for other stuff such as action figures, etc. I'd happily put more of my money into your pocket for more stuff to put around my room.

If you go online to www.csmoorestudio.com you can see the loads of The Walking Dead busts and statues that sculptor extraordinaire Clayburn Moore is producing. They're totally awesome. There should be more things on the horizon as well.

That's about it. My apologies if this letter was too long or seemed to ramble (first time writer remember) but I thank you for taking the time to read it. Keep up the good work sir, and remember you have a reader for as long as the series lasts!

Respectfully yours,
Fred S.

We're on track for forever right now. Keep those fingers crossed.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Let me just tell you what a fantastic ride this has been with The Walking Dead. I've collected comics for years and have never needed the kind of "fix" that I need each time I finish another issue of this amazing book. I love the realism of the characters, and the idea that no one is safe. This has a true sense of what an apocalyptic occurrence such as zombies inheriting the earth might be like. The true horror is not entirely the zombies, but in the true nature of people, and what they are capable of doing in the name of survival.

I've been around from the beginning issue of The Walking Dead and felt compelled to write this time (issue 47) because this is the first time I feel emotionally drained from reading comics. Dude, I am on the edge of my seat on every single panel of this issue, and last issue with Tyreese, WTF. LOL.

I also want to apologize to Mr. Charlie

Adlard. When he took over for Tony Moore way back when I was not originally happy with that, but Charlie, you rock. Your art with Robert's writing makes this a very solid book, and I'm glad your on board.

I do have one question for you. Is there any plans for spin-offs away from the current storyline (like in another part of the world), I think I read somewhere that you had said there isn't, but just wanted to make sure.

Anyway, keep up the good work. I'm a fan for life

Sincerely,
Jason Thomason

Yeah, I'm pretty against spin-offs in general. For INVINCIBLE (my superhero book) that title has more characters than this one, believe it or not, and as a superhero title I think it's cool to have spin-offs, it works with the genre better. For this book, I kind of like the idea of people only needing to have issues 1 through 150 to have the whole story. There's no need to remember that a mini-series that's out there takes place between issues 45 and 46... it's all just one continuing story. I like it simple... I think it's better that way.

Kirkman,

Yes, another great issue with a nail-biting cliffhanger. It shocked me the Guv would ram the fence.

1. Wouldn't he want to take over the prison intact?

Yes, but he decided that he wasn't going to GET the prison without tearing down part of the fence and in that moment he supposed it could be fixed later. He was a bit crazy, don't know if you noticed.

2. You stated in your letter column: "I've considered the gay couple thing..." a. Are you referring to yourself in a gay relationship?

I was referring to the book, I'm sure, I've considered putting a gay couple in the series. I was actually going to make Martinez gay, until I remembered that I was planning to have Rick beat him to death— then I thought, probably not the best thing to do with your first prominent gay character. There will be more gay characters eventually... not just Dexter and Andrew.

b. How would you explain your boyfriend to your child once they were old enough to damn you to hell?

You're joking right?

Axel got dead. Damn it! I was looking forward to some character development, you follow me? So far that makes two characters who've died after sex. You sick bastard.

It's just like Friday the 13th!

I'm glad Michonne didn't die. I just realized after typing this that you'll kill her now. Let me see, who will she have sex with before you kill her? Prediction: She'll have a threesome with Andrea and Dale and then take a dirt nap.

Oh crap—now I've got to rewrite this.

I want you to kill the Guv so bad, but that means keeping him around will make for some great stories.

Well, too late for that.

3. Do you have plans to have some characters experiment sexually (gay or bisexual)?

Carol would have done it in a minute if Lori had been up for it. There will be more of this type of thing eventually... or rather some of this type of thing... because there hasn't been much of any yet.

It would make sense for a new character or even some of the existing ones to sexually experiment. These are dire times, base instincts are a huge driving force.

I don't care what others say of TWD this title is not stale or treading water at all. Shit is always hitting the fan or about to hit the fan and spray everyone.

Sophea Uk
Salem, OR

P.S. Yes, Uk is my full last name.
Cambodian in the house!

Yay! Thanks for the kind words, Sophea.

Dear Kirkman,

You weren't kidding... no one is safe.

But why is it so hard for our beloved cast to kill the Governor? At least his fat henchman finally bought it. I actually cheered when it happened! I couldn't stand that character. Such a kiss-ass.

Poor Axel... I really liked him. I was happy for him when he finally got some tail. I also was hoping he would survive this ordeal so we could see him try to adjust to life outside the jail. Oh well.

I was very sorry to see Axel go as well... but that's life.

And please get rid of Lori. I really liked her at first but now she's just getting annoying. Have Rick raise the baby by himself. Well, with the help of Carl since he's missing a hand and all. That could make for some interesting stories. At the speed things are developing though, the baby would start walking around issue 500!

Can't wait to read the next issue and see what will happen to everybody.

Roch Vaillancourt

Heh, I assume you've read 48 by now.

Mr Prolific,

So I picked up the 3rd hard cover of TWD having enjoyed the 1st 2 - I'm not a horror or zombie enthusiast but appreciate great storytelling (not just YOU, Adlard, Rathburn, Wooton too right?) I couldn't wait any longer for what happened next so I bought issues 37-47 & now I'm up to date in what's been released & I've got some food for your thought.

Firstly, I will continue buying the individual issues - maybe as well as the HC's if I can afford to. So now I'm reading (& paying for) Astounding Wolf-man, Brit, Invincible & Ultimate X-men. Am I missing anything?

Marvel Zombies when it's coming out... and there's old trades like Capes and Tech Jacket that you should check out--but yeah, for the most part, I think you've got it all covered. Be on the lookout for Destroyer and Killraven from Marvel and myself in the future. And thanks for buying everything. You rock.

Secondly: how are you so prolific? I'd appreciate any insight into how you write - usually well - on a variety of subjects without all the books falling regularly behind schedule.

Some would argue that I am regularly behind schedule... and I am, a little. But y'know, I write an issue and some change every week... and the change ends up being an extra script or two a month, so I write about 5 or 6 books a month... no big deal, right?

Thirdly, I'm finding a couple of recent events puzzling. Why didn't Michonne just kill the governor (deliberate small 'g' as you have successfully created a character I have no respect for) having snuck up on him with an automatic weapon? Given their history I expected her to take the opportunity. I find it hard to believe she'd not kill him just to get her sword back. Then Andrea misses Philip sniping? Not quite as accurate because of her injury? (see how I'm providing excuses for you? I'd appreciate your thinking though :-)) You've proven adept at killing important characters - I was surprised, horrified by how and sad to see Tyreese go but then for the governor to keep surviving...you better have a HORRIBLE resolution for him in 48. Also, where are the biters in this denouement? Surely a few must have avoided being shot in the head and be trying to eat the Woodbury invaders/prison defenders, especially now the fences are down? Anyway, that's a small amount of questions for the 23 consecutive TWD I've stayed up too late to read.

Okay, Michonne didn't kill gov right away because she knew she wouldn't make it out of that group alive if she just fired--they would have turned on her and shot her down--so she was going to take the Governor hostage and kill him later--but that went to hell too.

Andrea missed because no one is perfect. She hit him in the chest, from the tower--that's pretty damn close. A head shot would have been difficult at that distance for her--she's not a trained sniper... and she was injured.

Fourthly, Andrew J. Shaw. He shows up a lot. Is this a contractual obligation? Sorry if you explained this before I've only been reading Letter Hacks since issue 37.

He writes bizarre letters that entertain me. It's pretty easy to get printed if you do that.

Finally, right now I'm liking Andrea best, DON'T kill her.

Theodore Crush Devon

Andrea's fate remains to be seen... so no promises, but I will say that we do find out, one way or the other, very soon.

P.S. You're reading XXXombies right?

I haven't read all the issues yet, but I started it.

Hey KirkMan,
I've been meaning to write you to let you know what sort of reaction the current arc has wrought.

With the first red label "No One Is Safe" issue in hand, and especially after the double cliffhanger, I literally could not bring myself to read it. You had me so filled with dread that I felt as if my not reading the book could save the cast from their fate. Never had that feeling before, only to have it resurface with the series finale of The Wire, so I thank you for that.

What I finally read was far messier and more darkly comic than I had anticipated. You did an excellent job of subverting and ultimately amplifying the threat of the Governor's crew by showing how raw they were. I couldn't help but laugh as he kept ducking behind the tank - for me, shades of Spanky shielding himself from spitballs in the "Friends, Romans, Countrymen.." bit in The Little Rascals.

How old are you?

The net effect was best illustrated in Tyrese's beheading, where you don't allow the reader or the survivors the benefit of a clean slice. Reality is full of gristle and tendons and that's the sort of horror you've best captured so far.

Looking forward to not wanting to read the ending. A quick prediction... does the bit of parka on the cover suggest that it's Michonne that has Lori and the baby at gunpoint?

It was supposed to... and it was supposed to be misleading.

In other news, at the end of Marvel Zombies 2, you said something to the effect of hoping the readers enjoyed it as much as the original. While the story had a number

of great premises, it didn't gel for me as a complete story. I feel like it could have been "Dawn" to MZI's "Night" if it had been paced out a little differently. The meat for me was the Redeemed Zombie Heroes vs. Cortez' Coup. If the Civil War part had been 2 issues and you dropped the redundant and plot-convenient Hulk fight, the intrigue of Zombie Guilt vs. Survivor Rage could have had the room to breathe. As it stands, the "Bwa Ha Ha", "to be continued...?", ending will forever damn the book to sequel status without allowing it to live on its own merits. Just a thought.

Well, the first book ended with a "To be continued...?" also. I was just trying to keep in line with the first. Your opinions are heard loud and clear. Thanks for sharing.

Would you have paced it differently now that it's all said and done?

Thanks and Cheers,
Michael

Probably not. I like the Hulk fight. I like the way it ended... I don't think I would have changed much of anything. I'm pretty proud of Marvel Zombies 2.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I have never written a letter to a comic before, but with recent events in my life, I've felt compelled to. A week ago, I was diagnosed with bladder cancer and had a tumor removed. Being a healthy 40 year old male, this has shocked and humbled me on many levels. I just want to thank you for The Walking Dead series. The terrific artistry and spectacular writing have allowed me to escape my health concerns. Like Rick states in issue №47, "Just get down and let's fight back! We can get through this!" This is what I plan on doing: Fighting back and beating cancer. I hope Rick continues to be a central figure in the comic. He exemplifies the human spirit and it's fighting nature. I would be saddened to see him leave the series but look forward to the current arc ending and the many changes it will bring. Thank you for giving me that monthly escape, and I look forward to reading this title for many years to come.

After reading this issue, I think you'll see that Rick isn't going anywhere just yet. He's been through a lot—but it's only making him

stronger. Best of luck to you in your upcoming fight. Please keep me posted on your success.

Your Fan,
Kevin J. Zaknich

P.S. I just bought the hardback copy of Marvel Zombies. I can't wait to open its pages and enter a new Kirkman world. Keep up the great work!

I hope you enjoy it.

Hyia!
Dear Crew...

You killed Tyreese and it's just... ok. It's your story, it's your world. Even with all heroes dead (but still walking) this will be one of best comic EVER. Still... It's a shame Tyreese died slowly, painfully, and without dignity from hands (uh, hand) of such a degenerate jerk

That's just so cruel. Awwwww, so cruel. MAAAAAAAAAAN, SO CRUEL !!!!!

It seems nobody needs zombies anymore. People were, are, and will always be each other's greatest foes. :o|

Take care.
-Raiin

P.S. Who's this? Whose boots are these? Michonne?

P.S.S. Please reconsider rule "one hero dies every episode". Pleeeeeeeeease.

There was never a "one hero dies every episode" rule. That said, heroes are safe in this series for a little while at least. We haven't had a death in two issues and counting.

Dear Robert Kirkman,

If you don't mind I would like to ask you some questions, I'm very curious about the walking dead. I have looked all over for a better comic on zombies, and nothing has come close to your delightfully grim yet highly addictive series. Anyways the questions...

1. Who is more like a pirate? Philip with his eye patch or Dale with his peg leg?

Peg Leg beats Eye Patch.

2. Are we going to see zombie animals or are you following Max Brooks' rule on that zombies can only be human

That's a Romero rule, right? Either way I follow it.

3. Do you ever put little "Easter eggs" inside issues, such as putting zombie celebrities or adding quotes from movies?

Burt Reynolds' mustache appears in every issue.

4. Are we ever going to see walking dead pals... or have you made them and I just couldn't find them?

I don't know what you're even talking about.

5. I'm guessing the outbreak in the story is not a virus (I award you 30 exp. for originality) any hints to what it is. I know in the past you've said you're not releasing that information anytime soon, but I figured I'd ask anyways.

I'm not telling.

For now that's all. I would like to say thank you for making a wonderful comic that is just as fun to read a second time... and many more times after that. Also thanks for keeping the price minimal and not putting any of those annoying ads in between pages.

Can't wait for the next 50 issues,
Michael Olvera

P.S. know that because of the extremely... cliff hanger ending in issue 47 I've attempted to freeze myself and then have my friend thaw and revive me when 48 comes out.

How'd that work out for you?

And that does it for letters in this—our fiftieth issue. Here's to another fifty... and then another... and then another.

Hopefully we'll make it to 100 in less time. See you back here very soon for issue 51.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, readers, Amanda here. We're into a post- No50 era now. I remember when we were discussing cover prompts months ago, really wanting to see Julian Totino Tedesco's take on this issue. Lucky enough for me, he was open to it as well. Sometimes there are just moments you know an artist is going to knock out of the park, and this was one of them. The haunting loneliness of Rick on that phone is such a striking image and elicits a really deep emotional response -- that's what great comics can do. Instead of some classic hacks this issue, we've a lovely old interview with Robert and the CBR team following up on the big milestone issue. Enjoy!

*Okay, folks... I'm knee deep in convention season and have very little time to read and respond to mail — so I've asked and the fine folks at www.comicbookresources.com have been gracious enough to allow me to run the interviews that they did with myself, Charlie Adlard, and Eric Stephenson in celebration of the release of *The Walking Dead* 50.*

They were conducted by Michael Patrick Sullivan and ran on the Comic Book Resources website over at www.comicbookresources.com or www.cbr.cc if you prefer something shorter.

You should visit their site — they're way cool. Okay — here goes.

ROBERT KIRKMAN INTERVIEW:

Robert Kirkman began his comics career by publishing his own work through the label of Funk-O-Tron. The most notable of this output was the infamous title “Battle Pope.” His success there soon led Kirkman to bigger things like a four-issue “SuperPatriot” miniseries for Image Comics, which in turn led him to shutter his own publishing house and put out his own creator-owned projects through Image. In early 2003, Kirkman launched the superhero title, “Invincible,” garnering both critical and popular acclaim. Kirkman then followed up on that success with something quite different, a black and white character drama set against a zombie

apocalypse called “The Walking Dead,” consistently the best-selling black and white title on the stands.

As “The Walking Dead” counts down to its milestone fiftieth issue, Kirkman sat down with CBR new to discuss the fan- favorite work.

“Rick Grimes is arguably the main character,” Kirkman said of his “Walking Dead” cast. “He’s the only character who’s been in every issue so far...and he’s the only character we’ve really focused on at all times. For the time being at least, ‘The Walking Dead’ is his story. He’s a small-town police officer whose life has been turned upside down by this zombie apocalypse business. He’s got a young son, named Carl who will be taking a more active role in the book starting with issue 50.

“There are a lot of characters for people to get to know in the book and they come and go as characters die off and new characters are encountered. This book has amassed quite a body count over its 50-issue run.”

“There are aspects of different people here and there in the characters,” Kirkman said of the basis for the large, though individually distinct cast, whose diversity and lifelikeness have made the book startlingly believable despite its fantastical premise. “A lot of different characters have aspects of my personality, I think, but for the most part, I’m just making people up. Not one character is exclusively based on one person. Except for The Governor, who is exactly like Joe Quesada. They are literally exactly the same.”

As readers have learned, no one is safe in “The Walking Dead.” The book has seen a great many characters leave its pages, including some popular, well-liked ones. Kirkman said, though, that it doesn’t get harder to make the death toll climb, no matter who it may be. “There have been times where I’ve held off on killing people because I didn’t think they had become established enough. It’s more fun to kill the characters that I’ll miss. That has more impact. I’ve never killed off a character just to kill someone in an issue.

“For the most part, most people die because that’s what would realistically happen. I recently killed off a big chunk of characters, not to shock people or shake the book up... but because a situation had arisen in the book where it would logically, be very hard to survive.”

Despite their penchant for ending up six feet under, sometimes the characters spring to life in ways that even their creator doesn’t expect. Said Kirkman, “There was a point in issue №18, I believe, where right up to the last-minute Lori and Rick were plotted to get into a big argument and decide to split up. That was the plan for them since the beginning of the series. I was writing the pages and I was trying to steer the dialogue to where the plot needed it to go. I’d type Rick saying something and then Lori reacting and vice versa and I just could not get them to a place where splitting up was logical. It was like I wanted two people to break up—and they started being rational and agreeable to each other right in front of my eyes... and the scene came to a close with them still together. Weird stuff.”

With such a large cast and in a seemingly constant state of flux, as characters die and new ones come onto the scene, some readers wonder whether Kirkman regrets populating “The Walking Dead” with so many substantive characters.

“At times, yeah, I wish there were less characters in the book,” Kirkman confessed, “but really that’s the nature of this kind of book. The characters live in a very dangerous world. If there were less of them the book would be over by now. I need to inject new blood into the book from time to time. And it’s fun dealing with all the different personalities and points of view. So sometimes it’s frustrating but for the most part, it’s exactly what makes ‘The Walking Dead’ the book it is.”

With such challenges, “The Walking Dead” is an ambitious book that sometimes seems to make its own decisions. Said the writer, “I’ve had a pretty loose plan that I’ve followed up to this point that I had worked out before I pitched the series. I had planned for them to arrive at the prison at the end of issue №7—not issue №12. I knew Michonne [a mysterious, katana-wielding woman] was going to show up with the two zombies on leashes, but I didn’t know that would be issue №19. So things changed along the way. I always planned on them getting into a battle with another well-established group of

survivors, but Woodbury and The Governor specifically came to me as I wrote the series. But the main points of the book were all in place at the start of the series. There are a few bits left that I haven’t gotten to yet. I had big plans when we started this series.”

Kirkman still has big plans. “Once we hit issue №12 or so, and it was clear that we’d be around for a while, my mind just sort of exploded with possibilities. So at this point, I’ve got a roadmap that could take us to issue №300, assuming the readers want us around that long. Now, that doesn’t mean I know what happens in the next 250 issues, that would be absurd, but I’ve got, like, ten or so big landmark events and getting to them and setting them up has a lot of little specific things that have to happen, so I don’t know what issue things will fall in or even what order some of the things will happen in, but it’s all just a matter of plugging in the events and working toward them.”

While Kirkman has adopted a longer view of the series, it’s not an infinite view. “I think the book is destined to end at some point,” Kirkman confirmed. “Nothing lasts forever, and I don’t see this as a ‘Spider-Man-like’ series that I would pass on to someone else at some point.

“Also, who knows... sales could tank at any moment, and I’d have to end the book. It’s unlikely but who knows when I’ll say, ‘this book is more popular than Jesus and turn the whole fan base against us.

“I really, really enjoy writing this book and all I’ve ever wanted out of my comics career is the opportunity to write a long issue-spanning story that I control 100%, so ending that seems foolish to me. If I ever saw that I was writing on co-pilot or not enjoying things or if readers were really hating the book, I’d do us all a favor and put a stop to it. Right now I feel like I could write this book for the rest of my life and be completely happy.”

As the series has grown, so has Kirkman’s storytelling. “I like to think I’m a better writer now and that I consider certain angles that I hadn’t or wouldn’t have back then,” he said. “Who knows? I certainly don’t see a significant difference in my writing but I’m sure there is. I think I’m more critical of my work now. I second-guess myself a bit more now than I used to, which is something I hate because it slows down the process a bit. I used to just lay out the ideas and keep moving, but now I examine, consider other

angles, I'm doing things now that I probably should have been doing all along."

With that in mind, there is a type of story that Kirkman has yet to depict in "The Walking Dead's" pages, aside from the social, political, dramatic, comedic and horrific tales he tells from month to month. "I think it would be neat if there was a stretch of the book that was more action-oriented," the writer said, "but only if it occurred naturally. It's all about the characters at this point. I just go where they take me."

More than just Kirkman's writing has grown since the series began in 2003. "I've grown a lot as a person since I started this book," said the writer. "I'm almost 30 now, I have a son. My personal life is completely different. When I started this book I didn't have two nickels to rub together. Now I have many nickels, enough nickels. To say this series changed my life completely would not be an overstatement. My career would certainly not be where it is today without this book."

Over the last five years, "The Walking Dead" has amassed a devoted following. "It's very odd. I've talked to other creators about this, but we seek out the negative comments," the writer explained. "I'll go to a message board and skim positive messages about a given issue and then the one I read is the one that starts with 'This book sucks' or 'I quit.' We all do it, I think. It's like the negative feedback is all that matters. I print a lot of mail in 'The Walking Dead,' but a sure-fire way to get printed is to send me a critical letter. I can't do anything with 'I love this book' other than say 'thanks,' so I don't print a lot of those. I actually enjoy the little bit of negative response I get--as long as it's intelligent and not just 'This book needs more nudity and/or gore' or 'Please put out the book in color.' I could do without those."

Added Kirkman, "I think, like most creators today, there's a pretty open line of communication with the fans and myself. I'm super easy to get in touch with and I actually to respond."

Sometimes, with genre fans, there comes a point where they take ownership of the characters they love and become more possessive of them and, in turn more critical about how they're handled by those whose actual job it is to tell the story. With "The Walking Dead" hitting fifty issues, Kirkman has seen little of this syndrome.

"Not so much, thankfully," said the writer.

"I know what you're talking about though, and it's always been kind of funny to me. Everyone in comics gets so bent out of shape about characters acting 'in-character.' Now, yes, Thor would probably never rape someone, and Spider-Man wouldn't rob a bank. That makes sense. But if I had Rick cut off his son's head in the next issue, that would seem way out of character, but humans--are y'know, living breathing creatures who sometimes snap, flip out--and whatever. I never show you what Rick is thinking. For all readers know, Rick has been planning on cutting Carl's head off for years. People don't always act consistently with their inner selves and people, on average, do keep a lot of emotions hidden, for whatever reason. Frankly, anyone is capable of anything, and as long as the story is told well, abrupt changes in a person's behavior is quite realistic."

With a solid fanbase and now a solid history both in sales and story, now is the time that "The Walking Dead" would be primed to move beyond its own monthly pages. But don't hold your breath. Kirkman has earned lots of attention from Hollywood regarding his zombie epic, "but I'm not going to take a deal just to take a deal," he said.

"My creator-owned work is very close to my heart and I'm lucky enough to not really need option money to survive, so I'm waiting for the right deal to come along. I don't want to just farm this thing out. I only want to do it if it's going to result in something good. I will say we came really close once and I was very excited, but this isn't horseshoes or hand grenades, so close doesn't count."

Nor is Kirkman about to start expanding out the series into a comics empire. "I think that's the mistake books make when they become as successful as 'The Walking Dead.' If I did a second series, it would make money--yes, it would be an instant success but how long would it last? I think dividing readers focus is a short-term cash-grab and a long-term detriment to the success of the book. If readers suddenly need to buy two books to get the whole story and they have to keep track of the order things occur in and things get more complicated, it weakens the integrity of the comic. Right now if you want to read 'The Walking Dead,' all you need is issues one through whatever-issue-just-came-out. Those are collected in trade paperback and hardcover to help you along--but you only need point A to point B. You don't have to know that 'The Walking Dead: Fire Bad' issues one to six take place between issues 46 and 47. If I

was only in this to make money, I'd do three 'Walking Dead' series. There'd be tons of books carrying that brand, but I'm really here to tell my story, and I recognize how lucky I am to get to do that. I'm not going to do anything to mess that up."

While a milestone like the series' fiftieth issue inspires a lot of looking back, Kirkman's also looked toward the future, both in the book and for the book. "There's a dramatic shift in the book starting with issue 48," said Kirkman. "I actually don't like talking about what's coming up in the book at all--because we've done a good job thus far of keeping things a secret and the book doesn't seem to have to telegraph upcoming big events to sell well. So things are changing a bit, and if you've read the issue you know what I mean. I will say -- the characters are out of the prison. Things are more dangerous and the book is going in new directions it hasn't gone in before. We're all very excited."

Kirkman did drop one hint. "Charlie Adlard going to be drawing more buildings very soon."

"In the real world, [there will be] more issues, more trade paperbacks and more hardcovers," Kirkman continued. "The Book Four Hardcover containing issues №37-48 will be out this year, and our second deluxe hardcover, sometimes referred to as an Omnibus, containing issues №25-48 will also be out in time for Christmas this year."

"In other news, I'm committed to getting the book out on a perfect schedule. I don't like to apologize for our schedule. We've gotten to issue 50 six months shy of five years, so I think we're doing phenomenally well for an independent series basically because has there ever been another comic that's done that? Maybe 'Cerebus,' but what other independent book has made it to №50, let alone done it in such a short amount of time. That said, there's no reason we couldn't have reached issue №50 in month №50, so that's what I'm working toward; shipping the book even better than we have been. I do feel like we owe it to the fans and retailers who've made this possible. The least we can do is get them the book on a regular schedule."

Since "The Walking Dead" debuted, zombies have become something of a cultural meme and have seen resurgence in virtually all forms of entertainment media, and Kirkman thinks they're here to stay. "I think zombies have risen to the level of vampires and

werewolves and will always be a staple of popular fiction -- with highs and lows like vampires and werewolves experience -- but I think they'll always be around in some form or another and I honestly wouldn't have it any other way."

CHARLIE ADLARD INTERVIEW:

Cartoonist Charlie Adlard is a comics veteran who began his career in his native Britain on titles like "White Death" with Robbie Morrison, and Judge Dredd in "2000 AD." American readers first saw his shadowy style in Topps' "The X-Files" comics series in the mid-nineties and in "Astronauts in Trouble," the critically acclaimed flagship title from AiT/Planet Lar. After a several years of work-for-hire for many of the major publishers, Adlard found himself with a steady gig on a new and, as fortune would have it, hugely popular creator-owned title, "The Walking Dead," written by Robert Kirkman and published by Image Comics.

In recognition of the book's milestone fiftieth issue, CBR spoke this week with writer Robert Kirkman and now Charlie Adlard sits down with us to talk about his work on the last four years of "The Walking Dead."

For the unfamiliar, "The Walking Dead," follows an ensemble cast as they try to survive a world that has faced a zombie apocalypse. A stark black and white comic, "The Walking Dead" has captured the imaginations of readers with its socio-political undertones and a focus on realistic human drama over creeps and gore.

"It's not a zombie comic," Charlie Adlard told CBR News. "We wouldn't have lasted fifty issues if it was just a zombie comic. It's a character book and it's about the characters and how they survive in an extreme situation. It's more akin to things like, for want of a better word, 'Lost,' the TV show. It's about people surviving in an alien environment. It just so happens that 'Lost' has an island and ours is a zombie holocaust."

Adlard continued, "The general public are aware there's a sort of zombie revival going on and as soon as you say it's a zombie book, I think a lot of people actually get a little put off by that because, you know what differentiates ours from any other zombie book."

Looking back on the series and its large and mostly deceased cast of characters, Adlard of course has his favorites. "Well, Robert's killed most of them," the artist laughed. "Actually one of my favorite characters is still alive, that's Michonne, so that's cool, but I didn't realize until after issue №48 that he'd killed all the characters that I'd actually created, apart from Michonne, because all the other characters surviving to now are from the beginning of the book. I know that's not intentional at all. It's just the way it happens."

"I do have a bigger connection with Michonne because I've been with her right from the beginning. It's nice that Robert gave me just the one," Adlard laughed again. "One left over to hang on to. Hopefully she'll be back again, but there's heaps more new characters coming in. Hopefully he won't kill them off as quickly as some of the others."

Adlard tries not to get too involved with Kirkman's side of the book. "I let him do the writing and he lets me do the artwork," he said. "Occasionally, when we have a conversation on the phone, we'll start talking about what he's planning, I leave him to do what he's good at. I'm not good at that, so most of the time I think, 'you're the professional.'"

"Also, I quite like to read the scripts as they come in and be surprised like a reader is," Adlard added, "so I don't really ask that many questions. It's all right to read them and go 'oh, okay. That's cool.'"

However, being so closely involved with the book means some fore knowledge of events, but even then, surprises lurk in the script pages. Said Adlard, "I know really, really roughly what's going to be happening in the bigger arc. There, again, what he's told me three months ago has probably changed. There were a couple of deaths in issue №48 that I didn't realize he was planning, for instance. So that was as much of a surprise to me as to the readers when I read the script."

Those surprises translate into the highly emotive and fresh artwork, for which Adlard has won much praise. "It makes it fresher for me as well. If I knew every tiny detail as it was coming, I don't think I'd enjoy drawing it as much, because I'm reading it and then I'm drawing it virtually immediately which gives me that sort of excitement."

Keeping himself in the dark about the future

of the storylines is just one part of what makes up Adlard's take on the zombie-ridden world of "The Walking Dead." "It's kind of interesting, my art style, because I don't have different styles, but I have different ways of drawing," the artist explained. "I don't change my style radically to suit a story, but I might change, say, equipment or something. Use something like a different sort of pen or brush for a certain story or book I'm doing. It gives it a different edge."

"With 'The Walking Dead,' I do it very quickly. The reason I did it quickly to begin with was that the first issue I had to do had to be done in two weeks. To Image and Robert's credit, they said 'It has to be done in two weeks, but please, please, please, if you can't do it in two weeks, don't worry.' I thought to myself 'No, I'll set myself a challenge. I'll do it in two weeks.' And I did kind of get it done in two weeks, so that sort of established the look."

Adlard continued, "Over the years that I've been drawing it, the quickness has worked in its favor, I think. Because it's a horror book, I think that the sort of sketchier approach that I use for it is more edgy, more angular. It's not so refined, giving it that slicker, more super-heroic look, perhaps. Because it's scratchier, it gives it that grit that more associated with harder-edged sort of stuff. So it's not just me thinking 'I've got to get the book done. Get it quickly. Get it out.' It's something that works with it."

In discussing the origins of the quick-style Adlard employs, he thought back to how he got the "Walking Dead" gig in the first place. "I knew Robert very, very vaguely," he said. "I did a book with Joe Casey, called 'Codeflesh,' for Image. The last three issues weren't actually done by Image, they were done by Robert when he was doing Funk-O-Tron [Kirkman's now-defunct publishing house], publishing 'Battle Pope.' He really liked the series and offered to publish the last three episodes. So he put them out and after that I didn't really hear from him at all until one day, I got an email out of the blue. The email actually started off with 'Do you want to earn money?'"

"Obviously he knew that 'The Walking Dead' already was doing well enough to guarantee a certain amount of money. That was sort of his 'in' with me. Luckily, he just got me when I was in, shall we say a 'low period' and looking for work. I had something on the go, but it really wasn't anything to shout from the rooftops. So, in many ways 'The Walking

Dead' came along and saved me from going down another road that would have been a lot less profitable.

Charlie Adlard's involvement with the book has done a lot more for him than put money in his pocket. "I've got a lot to thank 'The Walking Dead' and Robert for in the end," said Adlard. "I wouldn't have dreamt in a million years how well this book has done financially, professionally and creatively for me. On a professional level it's changed the way I see how I do things in the industry. Before 'The Walking Dead' I wouldn't have touched a creator-owned book with a barge pole. Primarily because I'm the artist, it takes longer to draw it than it does to write it, I have a wife and two kids, I have to support them, it's just not logical to go down that road the way the industry is at the moment.

"The only creator-owned in this industry worldwide, though I don't know about Japan, are European books. In most European books they give you a page rate, but in the United States and Britain, with a creator-owned book, you're taking the big risk. You're doing it for nothing. If it's successful, great. You reap the rewards. If it's not, you've basically just done X number of pages for free. Sure, you've fulfilled yourself creatively, but time-wise, you're exhausted and you're poor at the end of it. Doing 'The Walking Dead' has completely changed my outlook on that.

"Also, I'm lucky because I have spare time to do projects I want to do as opposed to doing it because somebody's offering me money for it. I did another project for [AiT/Planet Lar] with Joe Casey called 'Rock Bottom' which was basically, you know..." Adlard laughed. "I haven't received nickel spent for that book. I just wanted to draw it because it was so good. I'm doing a European book now and I've spent two days doing a page where, with 'The Walking Dead' I spend three hours. It's not financially viable to do it for me, but I'm able to do it because of 'The Walking Dead.' It's a fantastic position to be in."

Fans of Adlard's work on "The Walking Dead" have no cause to fear that Adlard's "better position in the industry" will lead him to seek greener pastures. He has no desire to mess with a winning formula. "I've been on 'The Walking Dead' for four years now. 'The X-Files' was only two. I see no light at the end of the tunnel in terms of me leaving the book. I can see another four, five, ten years."

Adlard remarked that he never thought he'd be able to say something like that. Because of "The Walking Dead," the artist said, "I can see my career further ahead of me than I ever have before."

ERIC STEPHENSON INTERVIEW:

As Executive Director of Image Comics, Eric Stephenson has seen a great many properties come through the fold of the San Francisco publisher. Some titles flourish, others disappear almost as rapidly as they arrived. Occasionally, one strikes a chord with readers and can be classified a legitimate phenomenon.

One such comic book is "The Walking Dead," the best-selling black-and-white zombie epic written by Robert Kirkman and illustrated by Charlie Adlard. In anticipation of the series' landmark fiftieth issue, CBR News has over the past few days spoken with Kirkman and Adlard, previewed pages from the hotly anticipated issue, and we're joined now by Eric Stephenson to look back on the series beginnings and to talk about what the book means to Image today.

Kirkman was hardly an unknown quantity to Stephenson when the writer came to Image with his idea for a zombie drama. "By the time Robert started talking to us about 'The Walking Dead,' he'd done his first 'SuperPatriot' miniseries and we were pretty far along on 'Invincible,'" Eric Stephenson told CBR News. "I don't remember if he pitched 'Tech Jacket' or 'The Walking Dead' first, but he definitely wanted to do more work at Image, and he was really excited about doing a zombie book. Part of that was down to his enthusiasm for zombie flicks, but he was also interested in doing something other than superheroes."

Stephenson recalled, however, that Kirkman's pitch was met with some concern. "We liked it, but I know Jim Valentino [then-Publisher of Image Comics] did feel it needed to be something more than 'just a zombie book.' Zombie comics weren't really a sure thing at that point, and I think Jim felt there needed to be more of a hook than 'Hey, zombies!' Robert and I wound up discussing the book quite a bit after Jim had voiced his reservations, and my position was that it looked and read well, but that Jim wanted to know what would make 'The

Walking Dead' stand out from other zombie titles.

"Robert told me that there were going to be some other elements to the story," Stephenson continued, "some sci-fi oriented stuff that would set the whole concept apart from other zombie titles. I think the idea was that the planet was being prepared for an alien invasion or something like that. Whatever it was, I passed that on to Valentino and he seemed to think that sounded different and interesting enough to give the title a green light. A little later, probably around issue six, I asked Robert what was going on with the alien invasion, because it didn't seem like he was setting that up at all. Robert laughed and said that was never going to happen, that he'd just pulled that out of thin air in an effort to convince us the book was going to be different."

Early on, Stephenson realized the "The Walking Dead" was a bonafide hit. The numbers told the story. "The first issue sold out right away, and then the second one did, too. Reorders were very strong right from the beginning and sales started trending upwards with issue three. There was the standard drop with issue two, but then it went right back up with three and kept climbing from there."

Image moved quickly to support its new breakout title and sustain its heat. "Early on, we supported the book with things like free copies to retailers and overships," said Stephenson, "but I think the most important thing we did was rush out that first trade and make sure it came out alongside issue seven. We've worked very closely with Robert to make sure 'The Walking Dead' is always in print, in as many different formats as possible and I think that's helped immeasurably in terms of expanding the book's audience, both within the direct market and beyond."

Conversely, "The Walking Dead" has also served Image in return. Asked if "The Walking Dead's" high profile has helped Image as a whole, Stephenson responded, "In some cases, sure. We have a pretty diverse line of books, though, so not everyone who enjoys 'The Walking Dead' is going to be interested in the full line. Some horror fans or zombie fans just aren't into superheroes or fantasy or sci-fi or whatever. 'The Walking Dead' probably brings more eyes to our books, but it really depends on the tastes of the individual readers as to whether or not they're going to branch out from there.

"It's certainly put the lie to that old myth that Image only publishes a certain type of superhero comic," Stephenson added.

In an industry that seemingly became infatuated with the zombie genre, "The Walking Dead" survived this invasion of the undead, as its fiftieth issue can attest. Stephenson has his belief on what has set the book apart from and caused it to rise above from the rest of the zombie books that have been published in the last several years. "I think the appeal of the book is the characters," he said. "It's not just a zombie book. At 50 issues, I can't imagine anyone's buying the book just to look at more decaying flesh."

It's a view Stephenson confirms with his favorite moment from the series thus far. "Issue six was an early favorite of mine, I thought the scene at the end of the issue, with Carl and Shane, was really well done," he said, referring to when the ostensible lead of the series, Rick, confronts his partner Shane while hunting. Shane preferred it when Rick was thought to be dead, and even had an affair with Rick's wife, Lori. Shane attempted to get that status quo back by killing Rick, but Rick's son Carl defends his father by shooting Shane in the throat. Afterward, he cried, "It isn't like killing the dead ones." Rick assured him that "it never should be."

"I'm not a big zombie fan myself," Stephenson confessed, "but the characters definitely caught my interest right from the beginning. Issue six, and that scene in particular, was kind of the point where I really got sucked in, though."

Beyond the fiftieth issue, Image will continue to support "The Walking Dead" with trade paperbacks and hardcover omnibus editions. Stephenson says there are further things in the offing. "We have other things planned, definitely, and I do think there are opportunities yet to be taken advantage of by the title. Robert and I were talking about this recently, and I think we've only begun to explore all the publishing options for this book."

Okay — next issue we'll get back into the normal letter answering business — I'll see you then!

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hi, readers, Amanda here. Michonne lives! What a relief. Her return this issue, aside from being spot-on with timing, felt like a warm embrace. It had only been a few issues with Rick and Carl on their own, but I was beginning to miss the rest of our group, and now part of the gang is getting back together. Next issue marks the first appearance of some new favorites and is our final issue of the year!! If you've been tracking down Arthur Adams' connecting covers, we're spotlighting these new arrivals over the next few issues -- a holiday gift from us to you, if you will, so check them out. Until then, we've got a short and sweet interview Robert did with Newsarama back in the day when he first joined Image Comics as a partner.

-Amanda

Okay, I'm VERY sorry for the lateness of this issue, I hope to be making an announcement soon on how I'm going to once and for all, get this book back on track (without changing a thing--don't worry). Now, speaking of announcements:

Recently, it was announced that I've been made partner at Image Comics. That's pretty cool, right? I'm very VERY excited about the new opportunities that's opened up and since the announcement I've pretty much been swamped with new and exciting things to deal with. SO... I'll be skipping my letters column duties again this month--which is VERY embarrassing, because I know these things are important to a lot of you.

Instead, I'll be running an interview from NEWSARAMA.COM conducted by one MATT BRADY which explains a little of what I've got planned for Image now that I'm sitting at the table with Larsen, McFarlane, Silvestri and Valentino.

Enjoy!

Newsarama: First off Robert, how did this get started? I have a feeling it wasn't something that you initiated?

Robert Kirkman: This came from my relationship with the current partners and publisher Eric Stephenson. They all seem to like me, and they know I've got good ideas for the company and would be a strong addition to their brain trust. This isn't just a matter of "his book sells well, let's make him a partner." I'm hoping to bring much more to the table than that.

NRAMA: What was your gut reaction when you were asked?

RK: I was very flattered. This is the first time in the history of Image Comics that someone new has been brought into the fold.

NRAMA: So, what does the position mean? What will your responsibilities be in addition to just creating your books?

RK: I'll be working closely with the other partners to take steps toward strengthening the Image Comics brand. I'll be working with new publisher Eric Stephenson as we hunt down exciting new talent that could use a boost from Image Comics and I'd also like to work with the talent we already have under our roof to do whatever I can to help them grow their readership and strengthen the overall Image Comics line. Don't misunderstand me, this isn't anything more than doing things like talking the Luna Brothers into doing more *Ultra* or begging Ennis, Palmiotti and Conner to do a sequel to *The Pro*, or sending Warren Ellis whiskey to entice him and Ben Templesmith to do more issues of *Fell*. It'll be things like that. Image Comics will always be a place where creators of a certain caliber can do whatever they want with complete and total freedom.

NRAMA: Why did you accept the offer?

RK: With INVINCIBLE and THE WALKING DEAD recently passing the

issue 50 mark, and THE ASTOUNDING WOLF-MAN going strong and many, many more ideas for creator-owned series bubbling up in my head—it was starting to become clear that Image Comics is my home. It's where I enjoy working the most, it's where I'm treated the best, and all I've ever wanted out of a publisher. What this offer means to me, is nothing less than the opportunity to do my part to ensure that Image Comics will be here for future generations to come, so they can have the same freedom and opportunity I've been given.

NRAMA: We recently spoke to Eric about his new title and plans for the future... tell us about your commitment/vision for Image.

RK: Image Comics was once the leader in this industry. Image led and the other publishers followed. Image Comics can be that company again. Other companies (who will go nameless) will never be able to compete with Marvel and DC on any level; they rise and fall on the strengths of whatever license they hold this week. And with recent missteps at DC, I see our two-party system slowly becoming a one-party system and that scares me, quite frankly. This industry thrives on competition... that's what keeps things going, the drive to compete—to do battle if you will... and that's what I'm after.

I'm not out to crush other publishers, I don't want to sell more comics and force them to sell less. I want to make comics exciting again, readers have been lulled to sleep by a pattern. Event, follow-up to event, lead up to next event, new event. Wash. Rinse. Repeat. In the process, very few new ideas are being brought to the table... it's just the same pieces getting moved around again and again and again and again. And all we're doing with that is maintaining the status quo. That will eventually get old, readers will tire of it. Let's stir the pot a little, shake things up. We need to raise the level of excitement in this industry. This tennis match of creators going back and forth from Marvel and DC is getting old. Let's change the game, bring in a new dynamic. Then we'll all sell more comics. Market share is irrelevant, let's all just sell more comics. That's what everyone wants.

Image has always been about being an

alternative... for readers and creators. I want Image to be the premier alternative. That's my main goal.

Image currently publishes some of the best books on the market... and some that are not the best. There are changes to be made that will result in a stronger and healthier Image Comics.

The Image "I" used to make other publishers quake in their boots and it's time to bring that fear back into the world of comics. It's time to wake the sleeping giant. The first step toward this goal will be announced at the Image Comics Panel at Comic-Con, 4pm on Friday... I'd recommend being there if you can make it.

NRAMA: As the Times story pointed out, your exclusive with Marvel is up. Does this new role at Image preclude you from working with Marvel or signing on another exclusive?

RK: I've been doing other creators, and the industry as a whole, a disservice for the last few years. I worked at Marvel partly to help get my name out there, to gain wider recognition, but mostly because I do like the characters and there are good people at Marvel, and I was having fun working there. It's always been assumed that I made my living at Marvel and did my Image books for fun. I've done nothing to dissuade that assumption, but nothing could be further from the truth. Marvel Comics has always been a fraction of my income. Aside from Ultimate X-Men and Marvel Zombies, most of my Marvel books have been outsold by my Image titles. I never worked at Marvel for the money; the money was insignificant in the grand scheme of things. I had a Spider-Man itch, I had an X-Men itch, I was there to scratch it... and I did, and I've moved on. My plan is to focus solely on creator-owned work for the foreseeable future. Creator-owned comics is where it is at. Brian K. Vaughan knows this, Warren Ellis knows this, Garth Ennis knows this, and I hope, in the coming years, more and more people will realize this and take the plunge.

NRAMA: That said, given that you have a larger stake in Image now, will you be scaling back on all your non-Image work?

RK: I've completed all my scripts for

Marvel; *Destroyer Max*, which I'm doing with Cory Walker, is done; *Killraven* with Rob Liefeld is done. Those are slow burn projects that will be shipping well into 2009, but aside from those and a few odds and ends that haven't been announced yet, I'm currently not doing any work for any publisher other than Image and I couldn't be happier.

NRAMA: Will you expanding your Image work?

RK: Absolutely. I've been banking concepts for the last four years while I was under contract at Marvel. You'll be seeing a lot more from me eventually. That said, I'm going to be holding off on debuting anything new until maybe summer of 2009. Aside from *Haunt* with Todd McFarlane, that, I'm told, will be debuting soon.

NRAMA: Anything else I missed that you'd like to mention?

RK: I'm making myself available for any comic creators wanting to discuss Image Comics at Comic-Con. I've got a pretty full schedule already, but if anyone would like to touch base, I'll try to fit you in.

So, that'll have to do for this month. I know, I know... I promise I'll get you a REAL honest-to-God letters column next issue. Keep writing letters--please.

I'll see you all back here, then.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, Letter Hacks! A big issue here! The arrival of Abraham, Eugene, and Rosita, three characters who will be important over this next story arc... and maybe beyond. To mark the occasion, we've got new covers from Arthur Adams and Charlie Adlard! And in case you missed it, we've also had a fun little crossover with Todd McFarlane's legendary Spawn. Catch Spawn and Michonne on a special variant cover this issue too!

This is our last issue of the year, so have a great holiday season all you readers! We'll see you back here in 2023, which just happens to be TWD's 20th anniversary. Lots of fun stuff to share and celebrate in the year to come!

-Amanda

I've been pretty light on the letters for the last few months, and the mail has been coming in pretty hot and heavy for the last few issues--in fact, I could have probably filled three issues worth of letters columns with the mail I received for issue #48... so thanks for writing in. But, we need to move on from that issue and I do have to keep these letters columns a little shorter at this time so that I can get all these books on time (I promise it'll be worth it in the end) so this issue's letters column will mostly touch on issue #49... but I did want to run this, my FAVORITE letter about issue #48:

"Oh my God... All the time, it was... You finally really did it. You Maniac! You blew it up! Ah, damn you! God damn you all to hell!"

Stan MacDonald

If you don't get the reference... I look upon you in SHAME!!!

Now, onto the response to issue #49... and who better to start with...?

Dear Kirkman,

I want my money back! By my count more than half the panels of this issue Didn't have dialog--but you might wanna go back and check that all the same. No, I didn't get much out of this issue. Please don't do like a 20 years later thing with Rick's son, Carl, in the next little while; cause I can kind of smell it coming. What could issue №50 be about? I smell maybe some new characters...? By the way, if you haven't been getting my letters for issues of Invincible don't worry; I haven't been Getting issues of Invincible.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Ah, another classic. Andrew, would you complain that a movie had too little dialogue? Would you complain that a song had too few lyrics? Comics are words--AND pictures and they use both to tell the story. Sometimes one more than the other--but it's an equal balance. There have been more than a few issues of THE WALKING DEAD that have had TWICE as much dialogue as the average comic... and there will be more like that as the series progresses--but y'know, people have to think and be upset and sleep and have quiet moments from time to time--or the book will just seem fake (or more fake). I'll make it up to you, promise.

And dammit--you should stick with INVINCIBLE. C'mon--you know you love it!

Mr. Kirkman,

First I want to say that you are one of my favorite writers and both Invincible and The Walking Dead two of my favorite books out. I haven't seen another

writer to be able to take the large cast of characters (even though it seems like you have cut that down drastically in TWD) and give the reader some feeling for each one of them is something that I haven't seen before.

As you can see from this very issue... the cast... isn't so small anymore. (Still smaller than it WAS).

Now with that said I just want to say that you are a sick, sick, sick person. After reading one of the most disturbing sequences I have ever read Gov. raping Michonne. Then read one of the most emotional scenes in an issue i.e. Tyreese getting beheaded. Then you top it off with another disturbing scene with Lori and Judith dying. Oh and by the looks of things you are going to leave Carl to fend for himself with the latest cliffhanger in issue 49. Very sick, but god damn can I not put this book down. It is the most interesting stories that I have ever read and you have really given us a book where anything can happen and with your twisted plans I am sure that more crazy issues are going to be coming.

Lastly, are there still plans for an Omnibus vol. 2 in the near future? I have read the each issue individually. But want some more Walking Dead on my bookshelf I have been holding out on the individual smaller HCs for the big Omnibus that I am hoping will come.

Keep going 'till 100
Josh Norman

Yes--Omnibus Volume 2, containing issues 24-48 WILL be in stores in November. So be on the lookout.

Kirkman!

I love Invincible, I love Battle Pope, I love The Astounding Wolf-Man. The Walking Dead owns me. I've been with you from the beginning but I can't stay silent any longer. I cried after seeing the last panel of issue 48. First time ever reading a comic. If you do it again we're going to have issues. I loved issue 49 took me a good 30 minutes to read and there

was barely any dialogue!

Did you hear that, Andrew Shaw?!

It was a good issue for reflecting on everything that's happened to everyone so quickly. I've been with these people in this impossible situation for over four years now and it still breaks my heart when everything turns to shit. I know you like trying to avoid him in your letters pages, but if this gets printed I want everyone to know that Bendis (though I love him) never has and never could make me care about a group of people like this for so long. I noticed that your TWD readers don't employ the numbered question format religiously in their letters, but I like it so here it goes.

1) Your writing and characterization is brilliant. I love everyone who even passes as a decent human being in this book. Do you get any sadistic pleasure from brutally killing someone I (and maybe other readers, but mostly me) care about? When will you stop breaking my heart?

I get excited when I feel like their death is going to be a definitive moment in the series... like the death of Tyreese. But I don't enjoy that I'm killing them. I don't know--most of the time I know it's coming a good long time in advance, sometimes years... so when I finally get to it, it's more like "oh, here's this scene" instead of "Woo-hoo, I'm killing a dude!!"

2) Will you just leave Rick alone for a couple of issues? If he gets any more effed up and lives you're going to have to employ some stupid mutant healing factor for his continued existence among the living. He is still alive after 49, right?

He is indeed. He's also been pretty much unscathed for the last few issues. The poor guy might just make it.

3) I know you love writing this book and that we both hope it goes on forever, but do you have any far reaching events that the book is heading towards or do you just plan out your next move as it comes?

There are two more big events planned for this book--and that'll get us up through 100 and beyond and I'm sure by the time we

get there I'll have a lot more planned. The Woodbury arc (25-48) was planned around the start of this series... so yeah, I plan things pretty far in advance.

4) Are there any dogs left in the world? Carl needs a friend badly. Someone that is loyal, protective and won't go batshit crazy. Although if you ever did introduce an animal companion i'm sure it would be torn apart six ways from Sunday.

Most artists hate drawing animals. I pride myself in never asking my artists to draw animals... that said, we just saw some horses--and we'll be seeing more things like that as time goes on.

5) More Astounding Wolf-Man, please?

I'm doing my best.

I know you and Charlie can't help but be phenomenal so keep it up! I'd read the book if it was just zombie moans and charlie's art, it's that good.

Your brain dead reader,
Omar

Thanks for writing!

Kirkman,

Your book is the only book out there that I willingly put myself into further debt. On a college budget this shit isn't cheap.

I must take my hat off to you sir! Every issue, you fucking blow my mind! Even when the douche bag at the store fucking tells me that Lori dies before I read your book you were capable to describe so much that dumb fuck couldn't. Just finished reading issue №49 in the parking lot of my local comic shop, and once again I find my mouth on the floor.

Wait a minute--the guy who sold you your book ruined it for you?! What an asshole. I'd stop going to that store. That's messed up. Who does that?

Congratulations on reaching issue №50! (by the time you read this it should be done on your end.) keep up the great work

and I find myself wondering what your going to think of next. Best of luck to you in the future. Keep this book on the shelves and I'll read it to the day you die.

Davis

Man--so many people congratulated us on reaching issue 50 before we actually did it. I'm glad we got the issue out! We would have looked like schmucks!

Dear Kirkman,

I haven't written in a while but I have still been reading. Wow. How the hell did this book make it so far?

Thanks for the vote of confidence! I'm glad you finally decided to write in--I think.

I worried every month that the announcement would finally drop and my monthly zombie goodness would be canceled. 50 issues and still going strong, man. Congrats! Since you moved the crew into the prison, I have been waiting for this issue, the issue where everyone I can't stand anymore dies. You killed all of them and more! The baby, man! That really hit a note I think, in the series overall. Babies represent the future. You killed the future. With everyone dead person rising and with no new people being born, the world is truly ending. I dig that. It seems we are now watching the final days of the human race. Good times. Ok, questions:

1. Are you still actively resisting the urge to improve the zombies? Make them smarter, faster, stronger (I'm thinking Romero here with Bub, Big Daddy, and his character in the Toe Tags comic).

I'm not resisting any urge--I have no desire to do that. That's Romero's thing and it was cool. I'm playing in a zombie world similar to Romero's--but I not outright stealing from the guy. We're going our own way.

2. Do you feel that zombies are relevant today? Never mind sales and all that, I mean philosophically. What does the zombie have to say about our reality?

Buddy, I never went to college. They're entertaining and I enjoy doing this book--relevant? Hell if I know. I think so... this world is a very dangerous place again.

3. Who are you voting for? Which candidate would make the best zombie?

Look, I'm a left of center kind of guy, but I'm not going to turn this into a political forum. I've finally reached an age where politics are very important to me. I think everyone should be as informed as possible and everyone should vote--but only if they're informed (or if they're blindly voting for my guy). Politics are important--but really, this is just a book about people trying to keep from getting eaten by zombies.

4. Was Dr. Logan on to something?

I don't know exactly what you're referring to. Bub kind of proved his theories right, right?

5. When are they going to find a helicopter? There must be a helicopter!

There was a helicopter in issue 26!!

I am still on board for another 50 issues. After that, it will likely suck, I mean come on. Only so many babies you can kill. Unless they find that helicopter. Then I am sure they could find more babies. Oh, and Shoot 'Em Up was one of the greatest movies ever. Carl should learn some gun- fu. That would keep me reading past issue 100... It seems THE working formula for a good zombie story goes something like this: Small group of survivors meets up with another in some safehouse. Shelter is besieged as internal conflicts arise, juxtaposed with what is going on outside. Internal conflict leads to breach in defense, zombies pour in, and many die. Few survivors fly off in the distance to assembly repeat scenario ad infinitum. Is this how you see this book continuing? I'd say you could just throw in those aliens to jack it all up, but the movie Undead did that pretty well. While I like the formulaic nature of the zombie story, I wonder how long it will take to get old. Romero decided zombies get smarter. Others write in some cure or reason for the outbreak (I

always imagine Jeff Goldblum running in shouting, "I figured it out!"). I am eagerly awaiting your personal twist.

You haven't let us down yet.

Love,
Chris Pitts

Y'know, when issue 3 or so was out--people were saying "This is good--but I don't see how it could last and remain as good" and here we are--issue 50, and people seem to still like it. Some think the book is better than it's ever been. I know I'm having just as much fun--hell, it seems like I'm writing issue 10, not 56 or whatever. So who's to say we can't keep it going after 100? Who's to say it won't still be as good? That formula you mentioned won't be the fate of this series, trust me. There's still a lot of cool things planned for this book before we throw the aliens in!

Dear Kirkman.

No request.

just one demand.

42 page issue.

Thank you the books been great lately.

Ken Wilson

Let's see if I can get the 22 page issues coming out on time first.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I have two questions for ye.

1.) If there is ever a Walking Dead television series that you are in charge of, would you prefer it be Black and White or in Color.

Color. I think it'd look to weird and arty in black and white. What works for the comic--won't work for a show.

2.) You have said you have decided not to reveal a cause for the zombie plague

(which I fully support and thank you for).
But have you come up with a reason for
the plague that you are keeping secret?

May the dead keep walking,
Adam Davis

*There is a reason, and as you can see at the
end of this issue--I might just have finally
decided to reveal it.*

*And with that--I'll leave you kids so that I
can get to work on getting issue 54 out very,
very soon.*

I'll see you then!

-Robert Kirkman





WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello readers and Happy New Year! I hope you all had a lovely holiday season. The Skybound offices were closed for a nice chunk of time, so I caught up on a bunch of reading. What comics are you looking forward to this coming year?

We're at the end of another story arc (I swear these go by so fast), so keep an eye out next issue for some new letters, and don't forget to write in if you have any burning questions for us. As we enter the 20th anniversary of THE WALKING DEAD, we'd love to hear from all you readers, whether you're longtime fans or just reading for the first time!

Until then, here are some classic Hacks from back in 2008.

-Amanda

Issue 54, kids. I gotta say... it feels good to be in the big numbers... firmly established, past issue fifty and full steam ahead. I still LOVE working on this book as much as I did on the first issue--in fact, infinitely more so. This is what I got into comics to do--to tell long continuing stories over an extremely long run on a series. Good times.

Also... I hope you've noticed we're getting the issues out pretty regularly these days. We plan on that being a continuing trend. Wish us luck.

Capt. Kirkman,

About six months ago I was given the entire Walking Dead series to borrow from a friend of mine and found myself hooked to the gills. Unfortunately as with most things I love, I have to pick it apart.

1. You can't kill everyone and expect people not to lose interest. At the core of any story are the characters, and I don't know if I have the patience to accept and empathize

with new ones whenever you get bored. In a movie when everyone dies the movie is over and I don't have to care anymore but this thing just keeps on going. Ugh.

Well, as you can see from this issue... there are a great many characters still alive... and so that shouldn't be too much of a problem, and also, there are some new characters that should grow on you over time. Tyreese wasn't introduced into the book until issue #7, Hershel in issue #10, Michonne in issue #19, The Governor in issue #27... this book is always going to be changing, growing and evolving... but there will never be a time when it's ALL new characters. So don't worry. Honestly, though--I think the evolving cast and the fact that anything can happen in this book is something that makes it so popular. We'll see... so far, sales have only gone UP since I killed "everyone" in issue 48.

2. I hate to say it but you might need to address the problem of a great deal of the characters looking too similar. I know I'm not alone here. Far too many times I found myself confusing one character for another or completely forgetting them altogether. Scars and headbands only work for so long.

I'd argue that the characters do look vastly different from each other now more than ever... and there's only so much you can do in a black and white book about normal people. Rick and Hershel might have looked similar before.... Andrea and Carol might have been hard to tell apart in one or two scenes... but that's not going to be a problem now. Everyone in the book now has a unique look... I'd be hard pressed to find something similar about any of them.

3. Cliff Rathburn is kick ass and has far too little to do with this series. Give him a page in the comic! Just let him draw a zombie like he used to on the back cover, but put it smack dab in the middle incorporated into the story like a jolting little wake up call.

I love Cliff as much as the next guy--but I'm

afraid that might be a bit too jarring--it'd take people out of the story.

4. You don't have to explain why the zombies are around, but someone needs to set some ground rules for those of us with bad memories. What kills them, how smart are they, what do we know and what can we learn?

It comes up from time to time... some of that was discussed this issue.

How about some military personnel or something? They could shed some light.

Keep reading... we'll have some answers of some kind as we move forward.

I stopped reading comics for a long time, but you've got me back on them. thanks.

Thanks for your time.
Brad Radcock

Thank YOU for some time. It's good to get letters like this--that make it easy for me to have something to say... without just making fun of you or being mean. Thanks for that.

Dear Robert,

I met you over the Chicago comic-con weekend. It was Friday in the fountain room after your panel that I missed. I was "guy in a red shirt". I had the Raiders hat on and the Raiders tattoo. It was a pleasure meeting you.

I remember you!

Thanks for being cool to a zombie fanboy! While talking to you, I asked if you could kill the twins off. You said "yes!" You even admitted that "they don't really do much do they?". Well sir, I geeked out and looked into it. They have a total of 10 lines in the whole run of the book. (issues 9, 10, 15, 16, 22 and 26). Most of the time all we see them doing is playing. I understand that their presence was important. Their youth and "family" made the group seem like a whole in the beginning of the book. It made Rick's responsibility of a leader important because it wasn't just adults and his family that had to be protected and fed.

Later, Chris and Julie get stuck baby-sitting the twins, Carl and Sophia. It allowed you to show us the angst in Chris and Julie because they didn't want to baby sit. The twins also made the loss of Donna seem somewhat important since she was their mother. Also, because of the twins, Allen's downward spiral into hopelessness was easier to understand and enhanced. After Allen finally died, you used the twins as a tool to express how Andrea has matured as a character. Andrea is still in her early 20's (I think). Having her take on the responsibility of the twins has matured her character. I can't possibly see any reason to keep the twins around any more. They have had very few lines in the book. They make very few appearances (about once per trade). Their deaths could be used to develop Dale and Andrea's relationship more. You already killed off Judith who was much more innocent than the twins are, so you've already crossed that line. Kill them off already. Everyone wins. You won't have to work them in the story. Adlard doesn't have to find a way draw them into the book. We don't have to read about them anymore. It's a win-win-win situation.

Thanks,
Mike Gineman
Ohio

Well, they DON'T do a whole lot in this series... but y'know they ARE little kids. It's not like they're going to be carrying stories anytime soon. That said, I do have plans for them and I'd hate to just kill them off so they don't appear once in every trade and bug you. As you've pointed out in your letter--they've served a whole lot of story elements of this series so far... and they'll continue being just as useful--just you wait.

Congratulations on 50.

I called in sick to work today so I could pick this issue up. Granted, I was also pretty hung-over, but I will still lay claim to the gesture as an example of how much one can actually care about a comic book.

It's very flattering--and I feel your pain. I was on a business trip for my day job before I worked in comics full time and I had no idea

where the comic shops were in the town I was in... and the new issue of SAVAGE DRAGON had shipped--so I got the phone book, called a cab and had him take me to a shop in the phone book. An hour or so later... and \$40 more broke--I arrived and bought my comic... and then had to pay another \$40 to get back. So yeah... I paid \$83 for an issue of Savage Dragon back when I was making less than 20K a year... fun times.

The wrap-around cover is so great that it almost makes up for the five recycled pages.

Ian Dennis

Five recycled pages? Did you get a misprinted copy?

Dear Robert:

Issue 50 = uh-mazing. Seriously, it's very good. The last few months, I haven't even made it back to my house before I had to stop and find out what's happening with everybody in TWD. I read №48 in the parking lot of a Lowe's and no one was there to hug me when it was over.

So, my friend from Kentucky says that nobody who actually lives in Kentucky likes My Morning Jacket. Is that true?

Well... I don't even know what "My Morning Jacket" is. A movie? A band? I have NO CLUE.

Do your friends and neighbors like TWD and/or Invincible? Do people just dislike the successful people from their hometown/state? Down here in Tennessee, we've got Eric Powell, but not nearly enough people appreciate him, from what I can tell. So what's your experience with people who live in your area? Is it weird when your friend or relative or someone you're acquainted with reads and likes something you've done? Or dislikes it? Or maybe they know where you got all your ideas and they're not impressed. Like, your aunt Lori was pissed when she heard about issue 48, but uncle Rick just thought it was kinda funny. And Tyreese was more popular than you in high school. Oh, I'm on to you.

Van Barnett

My father's name is Carl, but aside from that... there's next to nothing taken from my actual life for this book... aside from the setting of the first few issues. I grew up in Cynthiana, Kentucky (as did Tony Moore).

I have friends who read my work... as far as I know most of them like it... but I try to make sure it's clear that they don't HAVE to like my work. I mean, I don't care how many mattresses my friend sells at his job or how good of a factory worker someone is. This is, after all, just a job. Liking the work I do has nothing to do with friendship. So yeah...

Most local people are very friendly and supportive. They let me think they're interested in my stories and most of them are all around nice people... then again, I do technically live in the South.

All right, Kirkman.

I hate and love you at the same time. I hate to write you this letter and I hate to say the same damn thing I've ready in the past several letter hacks, but I'm going to say it anyway: This is indeed my first time writing into any comic in my whole life.

Suuuuuuure.

First up is the love. I haven't read comics in several years but your comic sucked me back in. I love it, more than any comic I've ever read. I'm a horror nut at heart and zombies have always been my favorite. Just something about the end of the world has always appealed to me, on a fantasy level only, of course. The reality is the end of the world would suck and I probably wouldn't make it a week. But I love you because you've given us such great stories and great characters and in a genre that I love. More importantly, my 11 year old son, who I'm slowly nurturing into a full blown horror nut (he's only up to Monster Squad so far, but he's about ready for some Freddy, don't ya think?), is also in love with your comic. It's a regular routine for us now. Each time we talk he asks me when the next Walking Dead is coming out. I tell him I don't know, since you can't get it down to a regular monthly cycle (that's just a preview to the hate, man). But finally the release date will appear on the Image forum and I give him the heads up -

next Wednesday it's out! He's excited, I'm excited. We get it, read it, discuss it, and begin the wait again.

Okay, so now it's time for the hate. Why can't you just release the damn thing once a month like you are supposed to? I've read your bit about how if you run the math on how long the comic has been out, you are nearly at the 12 issues a year. Yeah, you throw "nearly" in there, which prevents me from really ripping into you, but I'm going to do it anyway. I just googled the release date for issue №1; it was October 2003. So this October 2008 is going to be the five year anniversary, right? Where the hell is issue №60? Issue №50 came out on July 2nd and if I were a betting man, I suspect we might be at issue №53 by October. That's seven issues behind, man. Over a half year. I just can't accept that, so get with the program and start pumping these suckers out! Oh, but don't sacrifice quality or anything like that. I still want top quality.

This issue will be in stores in October 2008... so that's 54 issues in FIVE years. That's 11 issues a year... except for one year where we shipped 10. That's not so bad. Compare us to most other comics... and you'll see there aren't an awful lot of comics that get 12 issues out in a year. Also... let's give Charlie Adlard some credit here. What other artist produced 48 comics in four and a half years? Really... point them out... you'll get what... three guys? THREE. Charlie is THE MAN. He's busting his ass on this series and doing a damn fine job on it. He's drawing much more issues a year than most everyone.

That said... we'll be shipping 12 issues in 2009. It's guaranteed, the press release should have gone out by now. We're good to go. It's going to be awesome.

And while we are on the hate bit, why are the issues so damn short? My son and I read them and are like: That's it? That two minute read is all we get? Seriously, is that the standard length for a comic these days? It just seems like Wolf-Man is longer. Hopefully I'm wrong on that. I think the fact that I read all the hardcovers spoiled me, too.

THE WALKING DEAD is actually LONGER than Wolf-Man. You get two extra pages in THE WALKING DEAD. Sometimes we

do quieter issues... do yourself a favor and look at the art. That's the whole point with a comic. Blazing over the silent panels or tearing through a comic with less dialogue would be like fast forwarding through the silent parts of a movie... you'd miss something. I promise the issues would be far more rewarding if you take your time. Also, the recent issues with just Rick and Carl were largely silent... Carl didn't have anyone to talk to for a while there.

In closing, let me state that I'm coming to the Baltimore comic con and plan to get you to sign some stuff for me and my son. I expect you to take some pictures with us, too! Because even though I hate you, I love you, too, man. Thanks for everything.

Dave

By the time this sees print--I will have already met you and done this. Isn't that NEAT?

P.S. I reviewed your comic on my web site - horrordvds.com. If you happen to print this and let me plug my site in the best comic I've ever read, all will be forgiven. The choice is yours, dude.

Done.

P.P.S. You're an asshole for making me think Rick was a zombie. The full pager clinched it for me, along with the fact you are heartless son-of-bitch to the characters that I've grown to love.

Fooled you!

Dear Omnipotent Kirk One,

I have been reading comics for a relatively short time (three years) but your work is the first from any of the humanities that has reduced me to screaming profanities at a piece of paper. You, in a word, Kick-Ass. I used a hyphen so that is one word. Because I said so. I have been reading this book since I picked up the first hardcover on a whim so that I could score free shipping from an Internet book store. I read the entire thing in one night, while at work. I now have a personal rule NOT to read TWD while at work since I work on a psychiatric ward and screaming profanities

at inanimate objects during the middle of night is frowned upon. Needless to say, the next day I went to my local comic shop and ordered all of the trades, grabbed the singles in stock, and caught up with the story at issue 48. Damn. You have just surpassed Joss Whedon as my biggest Love/Hate man crush.

Hate? Where's the hate?

Anyway, numbered questions.

1) Do you yourself know what caused the zombie plague or are you in the dark as much as the rest of us?

I have ideas... but it's nothing set in stone because I never plan on writing it. So yes... I do know... kind of.

2) In the letters column for issue 50 you said "I would never kill a real person..." and then in another letter you said "trust me, if there's a hell... all the homeless people I've murdered will get me in there way faster than any story I've written in this series." While I understand the attempt at jocular, do you, Robert Kirkman, not consider the homeless "real" people?

*I do not.**

**This is another attempt at jocular.*

3) What is wrong with you? Read World War Z. It actually gave me nightmares (in the single meaning of the plural)

I discussed this with Max Brooks briefly at Comic-Con a year ago or so. I can't read World War Z for fear I'll be influenced by it. Same reason I haven't read The Zombie Survival guide (I do own both). I told Max this and he admitted that he didn't read The Walking Dead until AFTER he'd finished World War Z for the same reason. The problem is... if all goes well, The Walking Dead will never end... so I'm probably going to read World War Z soon. I'm really looking forward to it.

Your loyal reader until the zombie apocalypse claims us all,
James Kephart II

P.S. I find the use of post script in an electronic medium extremely hilarious.

And yet so many people do it.

Mr. Kirkman,

I'm a recent convert to WALKING DEAD fandom. Being a big Romero fan, once I got wind of the WALKING DEAD (which sounds gross) I had to pick up all the trades and back issues, which I read in a couple of glorious sittings. I was sad to see Tyreese go, thought Axel could've been kept around a little longer and developed more (as it was kind of interesting that they had a jailbird with them), and I look forward to the surviving cast getting back together again.

I know you like to kill all the characters, but can ya have some fuckin' mercy on Dale and Andrea for a little while longer? I like those two.

They're safe! See--they're safe--for now.

Since I've been reading back issues and the like, Issue 50 was the first one I've had to wait for. It was too damn short! Now, alas, I'm stuck waiting for №51...

— Greg Wierenga

P.S.: My girlfriend Amanda and I just got engaged! She doesn't like zombies for some reason, but wish her a congrats just the same. :)

Congrats!

And with that... another issue of The Walking Dead is in the can. Keep an eye out for issue 55 very soon. I'll see you there!

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Greetings, Letter Hacks! Here we are at issue #55 and the start of a new story arc. We've got the incredible Francis Manapul tackling our next six connecting covers and he's starting things off moody and atmospheric with a haunting and electric color palette on this first cover—keep an eye out for these! A new arc also means we're answering new mail, and all this year we'll try to get to as many letters as we can for TWD's 20th anniversary.

In non-TWD news, we're having a bit of fun with INVINCIBLE this month too, which is also sharing its 20th anniversary. We'll have a special black and white "Undeluxe" edition of INVINCIBLE #1 in comic shops January 25. See what we did there? We're clever.

Also, (Kirkman here) if you're into that sort of thing, INVINCIBLE UNDELUXE #1 will have a cutting room floor entry showing the handwritten plot for the issue and me blabbering on about writing the first issue of that long running series. So maybe you'll want to pick that up.

Now let's dive into some NEW letters! Wool

Hey! First time writing into Letter Hacks! I've been reading this comic since I was 10, 22 now. (23 by the time this releases) 12 Years! Just wanted to ask if you have any plans to do any more one-off issues? Thanks!

-Brock Martinez

Welcome to these hallowed halls, Brock. Thanks for writing in! For the record, I would love more one-off issues sometime in the future, but that's for Robert and Charlie to decide.

None planned at this point, unfortunately but I'd never say never.

Hello Walking Dead team. I got my letter printed once before in issue 19 and have been bragging about it to anyone who will listen ever since. Obviously I have to try to make the two timers club.

As I'm writing you I have just finished reading issue №42. Of course with the governor showing up again I can't wait for issue №43.

According to multiple letters columns criticizing Robert Kirkman is the best way to get your letter printed and for once I do actually have a complaint. I am a big fan of the TV show, but a first time TWD reader, as such I must say I was a bit disappointed seeing one of the cover for issue 41 which showed Carol being bitten. I know there are many fans reading the series again, but for me this came as a huge spoiler and ruined any surprise the ending of that issue had. TWD is obviously wildly successful and if these are the type of covers people want to see I can respect that, but as a first time reader I would like to ask if you can try and keep the spoiler covers to a minimum? Knowing so much from the show I enjoy being surprised when something happens in the comic that did not in the show.

Regardless of if you take this request into consideration or not I will of course continue reading as I love the series.

I do apologize for that. One cool aspect of this series is that people who may have never tried the TWD comics could now get in on the ground floor and enjoy it issue-to-issue. So, the fact that some of the covers are spoiling that experience is a bit of a bummer. We'll try to be more mindful of that in the future. It's just that the esteemed Mr. Finch is drawing the biggest moments from each issue and sometimes those moments are the end of the issue. We'll definitely try to keep a closer eye on that in the future.

I feel that it is customary to end the letters with a question so here is one that I have been pondering recently. TWD eventually transitioned from comic to TV series. Is there any chance we will see Fear the Walking Dead in a comic adaptation?

There is a not zero, but just barely, chance of that ever happening. It's extremely, extremely unlikely.

Austin Jewell from Michigan

P.S. I am one of the fans who actually does read the cutting room floor and I love it!

Well, the cutting room floor will DEFINITELY spoil the series moving forward a bit. I try to keep spoiler alerts in there, but tread carefully!

Good day, I know this series was originally in black & white, which I've never been a fan of. So I'm glad you brought it out in colour. I'm sure that a lot of people that bought in b/w are also buying the deluxe version, so they will know what to expect, so the covers won't worry them.

But an issue cover like №41 was a rather large spoiler! As good as the cover was it did somewhat spoil the story. The original cover gave nothing away. In saying this I very much enjoy the book, and hope to be seeing my 71st birthday, a few months before №193 is published. A strange reason for living, but a reason all the same!

Regards,
Terry E Brown.

A book about the dead is all the more reason to want to live, glad you're enjoying these, Terry. Thanks for writing in (and hope we made your year getting this letter in the column, sometimes it literally just comes down to timing).

Huh... these covers again.

Hello Walking Dead team! I'm enjoying the Deluxe reprints very much; I've noticed Dave McCaig's color job has added some great tension to a few scenes, so well done! I've also been a HUGE fan of many of the covers Art Adams has drawn, especially the one for issue 4 featuring Andrea. That one has a really nice Halloween-horror tone going on.

I'm sure you guys get all kinds of silly questions from readers, but I have one specifically for Mr. McCaig. In The Walking Dead №179, Michonne and Elodie go see a football game together. Well, the Commonwealth is set in Ohio, and we Ohioans love our football, so I took a lot of joy from that little scene. Football in the post-apocalypse? Awesome! I wonder if you might consider making one of the football players' jerseys scarlet and gray in the Deluxe reprints, as a little nod to Ohio State football?

Sincerely,
Ethan

#179 is a long ways away, but if any of us remember for then, Ethan, I'll pass along the thought.

Hi hackers

Having just read issue 43 (well I've read it 4 times now but first time in colour) the first panel has to be the best art in the whole run.

That really is a great piece, from a strategic placed head, to a surprisingly small amount of blood which backs the Governor was left alive. Quick question, the sick on his chest is that the Governor's? Also full respect to Charlie as the panel is as good in black and white as it is in colour.

That's Michonne's vomit. She puked on him when she looked down at what she'd done to him.

Now the real reason I'm getting in contact, I was just collecting the TPBs at the time so I didn't have a chance to ask first time around. The scene in 43 where Gov kisses his daughter on the mouth. Does this imply something awful when Penny was alive? You said in the cutting room floor that you wanted to add something big. Is this implying that or is this along with the fish tank heads a way for him to desensitize to all the madness?

I wrote the kiss in the script. The intention was that he pulled the teeth out of his daughter's mouth so she couldn't bite him if he kissed her. It was meant to be innocent, if not extremely disturbing. When the art came back, Charlie drew it as an open-mouthed kiss... which is even more... disturbing. We erased a little bit of the Governor's tongue, to make it a little less overt, but the image was so disturbing and so insane... we had to leave it in.

Logistically... I don't think it's possible to have a closed-mouth kiss with a zombie. I mean, they'd be trying to bite you the whole time. So, it does make a certain amount of sense.

You also mentioned in 42s CRF that you just weren't sure anyone would read that section. Please be aware it's the reason I'm buying the series again. So interesting to see thought processes and your commentary on your own work is quite enlightening.

Mike Garner
Rotherham, UK.

Great to know, Mikel! Thanks.

Hi team!

I'm not even sure if y'all are taking new letters anymore or how y'all put them out, but I just want to geek out a bit with yall!

We certainly are taking new letters, and thanks for geeking out!

With the series coming back in color, I've been so excited for the "Made to Suffer" arc to come through! In all honesty, it just feels so much darker in color. You follow me?

Also, seeing all these kick ass covers coming out from Finch and McCaig, to Todesco, and all these other ones, especially Platts connecting covers, I just cant handle how badass they all look!

No to mention the revamped original covers, it's fun to finally get the covers of the issues I don't have in my collection, so thank you for that! Well, see y'all next issue! 48 cant come fast enough!

Lots of love,
Andi Rose Tiscareño
El Paso, Texas

Awesome to hear, Andil Great to hear from you and awesome to know that you're enjoying the series.

Hey there, folks ~

First, thank you for allowing me to get in on the ground floor of such a monumental series. I was a Walking Dead comic virgin until the Deluxe rollout. Found out that the co-owner of my LCBS was as well.

(Hi, Warren, Jayden, and CaptCan Crew!)

I really don't care if this whole thing is a money grab. I'm going to enjoy every ish and hopefully bring a few trustworthy people along with me on the road to 193.

Take care!
Bruce Butgereit II
Hamilton, Ontario

Money grab? Eh... everything published is published for money, these are jobs after all. But money grab? I disagree with that. I've bought every color version of every black and white book I've enjoyed. As a fan, I love that stuff. Bone in color? Hell yeah. RASL? Equally awesome. From Hell? Yes please. Scott Pilgrim? Yes! Did those series do a full single issue run with multiple variant covers? No. They certainly did not. Did they have a run of 193 issues to get through? No. That is QUITE an uphill climb for a reprint series to accomplish. And as much as some people don't care for variants, there's a ton of people out there who love them. So, giving people what they want to ensure we get to reprint the full 193 issue run? I don't see a problem with that at all.

Robert,

Issues 45-48 are some of the most riveting comics I have ever read. That ending in 48 always gets my heart pounding.

Axel was such a great character. Not only the sense of humor and the spots where they are placed but the fact that the prison was his home. He's the only one that really had a deep connection to the place. It's a relatable and simple concept to connect to. It's poetic that he died in the prison but man he was missed over the years.

Those novels with Jay were excellent. After reading them the character of Lily became another one sorely missed in the comics. She was a fantastic character.

Brandon Borzelli
Lebanon, NJ

Thanks, glad you dug it Brandon! And nice shout out for the novels I did with Jay Bonansinga. Check those out!

Dear Mr. Kirkman-

(It's embarrassing how long it took me to decide how to address this letter, lol)

Was "dear jackass" a contender?

A long, long time ago, I collected comic books in high school. Like most kids once I got to university I didn't have the time or money to continue. Then a couple years ago this crazy thing called a pandemic happened. I spent a lot of time going through my things and Marie Kondo-ing my life... when I found my comic book collection. I'm probably not the only person who turned to nostalgia at this time to feel better, but suffice to say I started visiting my local comic book store (when it was open anyway), and you decided to start publishing TWDD at the exact same time. Kismet.

Now, most of what I know about this series comes from AMC's The Walking Dead. And I can't lie, I didn't love it. A few amazing characters, like Glen and Michonne, kept me watching. But then Glen died and I gave up on the show. I have a friend (Meagan) who kept reassuring me the comics were waaay better, and filled me in on a lot of the differences from page to screen. All that to say that this run is giving me my long-awaited excuse to finally sit down and read the comics.

I wanted to write this letter earlier, because this year Meagan got married to the love of her life (Dan) and was hoping you could give them a little shoutout and well wishes. But I kept getting distracted and didn't manage to write this until after her wedding. Anyway, I wouldn't be here without her.

Huge congratulations to Meagan and Dan on your

wedding! Thanks for steering Guenevere to the comics! Much appreciated!

All right, enough about me, I would love to ask you some questions!

1) Obviously colouring the series is a huge endeavour, but I wondered why you didn't take the time to correct little mistakes in the art, like the name of the Wiltshire Estate?

Well, that one for sure is just a little thing that most people don't notice. In the case of Rick's regrown hands... well... that's just an error on our part.

2) I see that the series ends at ish 193. You were so agonizingly close to 200. Why did you stop early???

The collection breaks (every 6 issues) were more important than anniversary issues. The collection break was actually 192, so we did an extra and oversized issue to wrap things up. Also, 192 is a multiple of 6, 12, 24 and 48. So that's where the paperbacks, hardcovers, deluxe hardcovers, and most importantly, compendiums ended. So, 192 was the perfect ending point (which is why I prepared for it four years in advance), and 200 was not.

3) Going through the series again, do you feel inspired to start up TWD, picking up where you left off? Maybe focusing on a different set of characters?

I gave 16 years of my life to this world. I may dabble in it at some point in the future, but I doubt I'll ever return to do a full series. But... I'd never say never.

4) I love that you are reprinting the letter hacks, it's a really interesting time capsule. But I keep seeing mentions about extras in the comic, like the Christmas story in ish 35, and character bios, missing in this version. I don't miss the character bios, but I am dying to read that Christmas story. Do you think you might reprint it in a future ish?

All of that extra material will be colored and reprinted at some point in the future.

Thanks so much for printing this (presumptuous, ain't I?),

-Guenevere Lee

Hey! You were right!

Heyo! First letter I'm ever sending to a writer.

I have to say I am in love with the universe you

have created. I'm so happy you decided to re-release all these issues in color. Being born in 03 means I didn't get to collect them when they first came out. But I assure you, I'm collecting now!

Wow, you were born the same year this series was... that sure makes... me feel old. Also, being old makes me feel old.

Anyways, I'm currently catching up and reading through the letter hacks of issue 33. In it there is a specific letter that mentions a second book about a completely different set of people. At the time you said you didn't want to do it in fear of it possibly hurting the sales of TWD. I know we've kinda gotten a glimpse at what you could have meant with Fear The Walking Dead, but would you ever consider doing a second book now? About a completely different group? I think it would be a great idea and with the shows as popular as they are, I feel like a new book could bring in all the fans of those shows.

Ha! See previous letter response. Lots of people asking for a new series here. The closest we'll likely come to this is an entirely new series from me that's completely separate from TWD but has subject matter that would appeal to TWD fans. That's the best I could do at this point.

One more question. Where is our open world TWD game?! I would love to see a TWD game in the same vein as Fallout or Skyrim, where we can travel the world of TWD, whether it be locations we already know or a completely brand new story. Maybe we could learn more about the Delta from the fourth Telltale game! Either way an open world TWD game where we can build up our own community Fallout 4 style would be awesome!!

Anyways, I hope all keeps going well.

-Collin Pearson

I agree! An open world game would be great! But those are hard to do so who knows if one will ever happen. Fingers crossed!

Kirkman,

If I've timed this properly and I'm lucky enough to get this letter printed in Issue №55, readers will have recently been introduced to my favorite character in the entire Walking Dead universe, Eugene Porter. I don't quite know how to put into words how much I love Eugene. He is a character that stands out to me more than any other I've ever read about or seen. Character development over time has always been one of your greatest strengths as a writer and that has never been more evident

than with Eugene. I could go on and on about this but we both know that's not what you really want. You want numbered questions. Here we go!

Whew!

1) When you first came up with Eugene's character, did you already know how important he would be to the series? Or did his importance evolve over time?

Definitely not. I knew in the short term his story would get them to Washington but everything else unfolded over time.

2) Eugene's mullet has become iconic. If you had to go back and give him a different but equally ridiculous hairstyle, which one would it be and why?

I'd never change the mullet!

3) How do you feel about Josh McDermitt's portrayal of Eugene on the TV show?

Josh was just the greatest. He really spun Eugene into an icon. His portrayal of him was so unique and so memorable. I remember the casting process for Eugene and, to be clear, Josh was up against some heavy-hitters, and he was one of the actors who just obliterated the competition with what he brought to the table. It was stunning seeing Eugene come to life before our very eyes. But over the course of the show, he really evolved the character and expanded what the character could be in really interesting and compelling ways. Eugene owes so much to Josh's performance. I don't think he'd be half as memorable without him.

4) To the many, many people who are not fans of Eugene, what would you say to defend him?

I'd argue there aren't "many, many" people who qualify as such.

5) Do you have any Eugene facts or tidbits that never made it into the comics/show? If yes, please share.

I do not.

That's all for now. Thank you so much for creating this amazing world. And thank you for Eugene.

Becca Broda

Thanks for writing!

And that's all we have time for now. We'll be answering new mail again in #61 so get those

letters in! And below, a few classic letters just to close us out.

-Amanda LaFranco

Thanks for writing in everyone! See you in another half-dozen issues!!

-Robert Kirkman

So... you guys have had it easy for a few issues... it's time to start killing characters again! Yay!

I'm pretty proud of this issue, it's pretty rare for me to get done with something and think, "Hey, this is okay." This is one of those times. Charlie, Cliff, and Rus all did a bang-up job. I hope you kids dig it as much as I do.

I feel compelled to mention that around the same time this issue ships you should be able to find a few Walking Dead related items in stores. The Walking Dead 2009 calendar is in stores. The Walking Dead Book Four is at the printer and The Walking Dead: The Covers hardcover, containing the first 50 covers with commentary and whatnot will be in stores soon... so that's a whole heck of a lot of TWD to be purchasing... snap to it!

Now, let's snap to some letters!

Dear, Mr. Kirkman

I just wanted to take the time to write to you and thank you for putting out TWD. You obviously work very hard on it, and it can't be easy to come up with something so imaginative every month. Well maybe not EVERY month, but considering everything else you put out (huh huh, put out), close enough. I do quite a bit of reading for someone who works 40+ and goes to school three nights a week. I've read every poem and short story by Edgar Allen Poe (who is my favorite writer), (what?! You like Poe more than ME?!) I've read almost everything by Shakespeare, some Hemingway, etc. I'm not saying this to sound like a pompous douche, though I'm sure I do. I just wanted you to know that, while I don't have a literary degree or anything, when it comes to good writing I know my stuff, and I would put your writing in the same class as Poe's any day. I read comic books as a kid, this is the first I've read as an adult and I've promptly bought every trade paperback (8 right?), and some regular issues. I haven't been so into a comic book since I was 12 reading Ghost Rider. I was just wondering, have you ever considered writing a book? One without pictures I mean. Not that Adlard and Rathburn don't do a fantastic job, I just think it would be an extremely valuable addition to the literary world, and I'm not just saying that because I have an affinity for anything Zombie based.

Again thank you so much, and thank you for taking the time to read this ass-kissing fest.

Sincerely,
Dan Noone

I would like to write a novel someday--and I have had offers from publishers to do so... but it takes different muscles to write prose and honestly, I'm a bit intimidated. I get to hide behind awesome artists with my work now--you see what I write through the filter of comic art--you don't actually see my work (except for in the balloons, I guess).

So... someday but not any time soon... I don't think.

Dear Mr. Kirkman!

I'm one of your few German readers and I apologize for my bad English skills, but there are just some things I want to tell you.

Whatever--we're HUGE in Germany!

I just read the whole TWD storyline up to issue 51 and I wanted to thank you. Not for ripping me my money, because the shipping costs of every fucking issue are eating me alive, but for your great storytelling. I didn't know any of your works, but then one day a friend showed me TWD and I had to read every issue in the last 2 weeks. I simply love your writing style, the characters, the setting and even the cliffhangers (hey, it's pretty dark inside your ass)...the early 20 issues weren't that great, but you proved you had a plan all the way!

Dark inside my ass? Because you're kissing it? Is that what you mean? You crazy Germans!

I didn't quite get why you received so much mails because of that black and white thing, I get the point of it, but as a German reader it's not a focus-thing when I read your stories, it's about life and death, trust, friendship love and not about race or am I wrong?

You're right--it's not about race.

Speaking of love, did you plan to kill Lori and Judi from the beginning? I know it doesn't matter that much now, but it was Rick's baby, right? Or will it be revealed during the phone calls with the dead Loh? I appreciate that the actual issues aren't that fast, gives me time to breathe, cause the past few issues nearly blew my brains out. Thanks again for this hell ride, it was worth every fucking minute; keep on writing that good stuff, you'll have one fan for sure!

Lori's death was planned for a good long time... but I don't remember how early. Maybe around

the time of issue 10 or so... but I'm having trouble remembering right now.

Are you coming to Germany soon? I'd like you to sign some of my books...or you could just take a picture of yourself with an autograph, so everyone can download it from kirkmania.com

That wouldn't be the same!

By the way, is there a slight chance that there's a new BATTLE POPE coming? Just read the 14 issues and I nearly laughed the whole time, very funny stuff you came up with!

I would like to do new Battle Pope at some point. I had planned on doing it in 2008, but never got around to it. I'd like to eventually, though.

I'll finish reading Y: The Last Man and the next thing on my list is INVINCIBLE, promised!

Have you ever seen that Spanish zombie movie Una de Zombies? It's a good one... I think.

Never seen it.

So much for now...I never wrote to a comic magazine before especially not when it's overseas, but you are definitely worth writing to, so please print this letter!

Your fan since issue 1, Greetings,

Matthias Olschewski
Germany

Consider this letter printed!

My Dearest Walking Dead Crew, Is it too much to say I love you?

Yes.

I read a lot of comic books (a lot of comic books) and this is the only one that is just breathtaking every single issue. EVERY SINGLE one. For 51 straight issues I have just been blown away.

I'll make this short, but I just want to say that unless Kirkman does something ridiculously stupid (which I don't see happening) I will NEVER drop this book. NEVER.

Keep it up guys! You're amazing!
-Brandt Williams

You have no idea what I have planned Brandt! Glad to hear I have your support regardless. I'll go light on the stupid from here on out.

Mr.Kirkman,

I read and enjoyed issue №50 as much as I've enjoyed the rest of your work, but it felt to me as if the dialogue was a bit off. So I'm pretty much wondering if the issue was somewhat rushed or if I should just read it again? Thanks for the great story either way.

Jake

That issue is mostly Carl talking[] and he's a little kid. Maybe that's the problem? I don't really know. I thought the issue worked well, dialogue-wise. As a kid, I purposefully make Carl's speech a little more labored and clunky.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

First off, I just wanted to thank you and Charlie for creating such an amazing comic book. THE WALKING DEAD has helped change the general public's perception of what a comic book is. The moment after I read the first graphic novel, I recommended it to my friends who are not comic book fans. That copy quickly spread throughout my group of friends like the plague. Now, years later all of them head to local comic shops every week and come back with bundles of books. Once again, I must thank you for writing such engaging and creative masterpieces.

Now for a question-- After years of writing this series, if you were given the chance to revise the comic, is there anything that you would change ie. particular moments or characters, etc.? From my point of view, the books are near-perfect as is. However, I am wondering if upon reflection, you would make any edits or changes to your work? Were you hampered by any deadlines or publishing restrictions? Thank for taking the time to read this letter. I look forward to reading the next issue of Walking Dead.

Sincerely,
Tim M. Molyneux

I don't know... if I wasn't hampered by time, I might write the book a little slower--but who's to say that wouldn't make the book WORSE? Looking back, MAYBE I wouldn't have cut Rick's hand off--and MAYBE I would have had Glenn get raped in Woodbury instead of Michonne... but I don't know... maybe not. The book is very successful, so I probably wouldn't change a thing.... just to be safe. Not because I think the book is perfect... it's just, if it ain't broke, don't fix it right?

Kirkman & Company,

Finally! Michonne makes her return to the story. I'm chomping at the bit to see more survivors from the prison massacre. Even more intriguing is the teaser image of next issue. Who are these people? Friend or foe? Or something else altogether?

Everytime you introduce new characters it's been a blast, and I expect this instance to be no different.

1. Will Rick and/or Michonne find new love in their desolate world?

Who knows...

2. Could they find solace in each other's arms?

They certainly seem to be forming a bond.

3. Do you plan on Rick, Michonne and Carl meeting up with survivors from the prison massacre? How soon?

Heh... issue #53, actually.

I do have ONE request: Please, stop making assurances that you will rectify the publishing frequency of TWD. You have yet to fulfill this promise. It's to the point of irritation.

Ask me about that in a few months.

I bought the Walking Dead HC volume 3 for my friend's birthday recently. A couple of days later she's asking for the 4th volume. Sheesh!

Make it so!
Sophea Uk

People are so damn needy!!

Okay, well, that does it for another issue of THE WALKING DEAD. Sorry again for the shorter letters column, but it's a necessity to getting the book out faster, so I hope you all understand.

Maybe... just maybe, I'll give you a longer one in an issue or so. We'll see.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, Letter Hacks, Amanda here. This is one of the darker issues of THE WALKING DEAD for me personally, but it's also one that left me with a better sense of empathy. These characters have been through a lot, and even as the world constantly moves around them, there's so much they haven't been able to process. Rick really hammers that home in his conversation with Michonne. In the zombie apocalypse finding the space to talk about feelings of suicide or depression is difficult, but let's make no mistake, it's difficult here too. If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, in the U.S. you can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-TALK, or text 741741. Calls and texts are free and confidential.

Things will really start to pick up for our group after this, and hopefully, everyone will start being a little more honest with each other, including Abraham. Thank goodness, he's got Rosita checking in on him. We've got some classic letters below, see you next issue!

So what is this... issue... uh... 56? Right? Sorry, I'm starting to lose track of the numbering.

Welcome aboard, I hope you guys and gals dug the issue. We're having a lot of fun here with the series and we're all very excited about the direction the book is taking, so I hope it's coming through in the reading.

We're still playing catch-up a bit, trying to make sure these issues ship on time so you're going to have to put up with the shorter-than-usual letters columns a little bit longer.

It's not that big a deal, right? I mean, Andrew Shaw's letters are still getting printed. Speaking of which...

Dear Kirk-the-Man,

You had me. You really had me! I thought for sure that this series was pretty much done with, and that the Rick-and- Carl-Connection (that's a wrestling thing; you wouldn't understand) would roam the open plains together forever!!

It was BOOOO-ring—karaoke, even! But then, to borrow a line from a fellow critic: Magic! The characters, old and new, started piling up again!! And now we're on the precipice of something really big!! I can feel it. I agree with scientist- guy's assessment that Washington D.C. is the place to be... all those secret underground bunkers and stuff! And what's more, if he knows what caused the plague, well, that's— that's something too, right!? But what is Dale afraid of if he isn't afraid of the Dead? BEING dead? The Guv'nors people? Yeah, I liked this issue pretty well, I surmise. More issues like this—please! And it's not that I haven't been buying issues of INVINCIBLE— they just haven't been coming in!!

By the way, who was the Original pencil artist on TWD? I've been racking my brains (I have so many) but just can't seem to remember. And when did Charlie Adlard start on the book? I know he did Thunderbolts at one time, right?

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Wow Andrew, just... wow. I think that's the first time you've seemed to actually enjoy and issue of my work. This is a proud moment for me. Really. Very proud.

To answer your question, Tony Moore was the original artist on The Walking Dead. He drew issues one through six—and then Charlie came on with issue seven and has been here ever since. Charlie did do a Thunderbolts annual, at least—as well as countless other comics. Charlie has drawn many many comic books in his long career because he is very old.

Kirkman,

Can the zombies go up stairs?

Regards,
Jeremy Woods, New Zealand.

Not usually—it's decided on a case-by-case basis... I'm sure there's a zombie out there who could... but not very well. Good question. Hey—to reference this series—was it issue 8? Rick opens the door to the basement of that house--

and zombies are waiting at the top of the stairs and rush him! Look at me remembering my own books. So based on that scene--yeah, zombies can go up stairs... but it probably took them a while.

Kirkman of Action,

This is the week! THE WALKING DEAD finally caught up with INVINCIBLE. Congratulations, sir.

Are you congratulating me on one of my books having a slightly poorer shipping schedule than the other? Sheesh! Invincible should catch up again very soon. By the end of the year the books should be comfortably one issue away from each other.

To me, it means synchronicity. You've kept these books on a tight schedule through an artist change, your varied work at Marvel, and you still make time for letters. That's a success that the Big 2 have never achieved. I'll be with BRIT if it only comes out once a year...so what does keeping your books on schedule mean to you?

Well, you're one of those fine people I adore, who have noticed that up until now--the books have been on a pretty good schedule already--so thanks for that. Even when compared to a lot of Marvel and DC books, my Image titles do ship frequently--so there.

BUT, moving forward, I plan on hitting monthly dates like clockwork. I'm hoping this will show my commitment to the titles and make the titles that much more accessible to new readers. While the books I'm currently writing are doing very well... I would never turn away new readers--we could always be selling more.

It's also the first month where my Image, Dark Horse, and independent titles outnumber my Marvel purchases. We're in tight financial times and Marvel keeps putting out more and more crap \$3.99 books. I think it's important to leave budget for trying new stuff, because I read comics as a creative outlet. The same characters and stories recycled over and over is not creative. So needless to say, I think your "manifesto" about driving the industry towards creator- owned work is timely and bold. The industry and the graphic storytelling medium as a whole will be better for it. What would you say is the biggest challenge to moving in that direction?

Exclusive contracts are a big problem. It kept me from doing more creator-owned stuff when I was under contract... and contracts are staggered, so that no one is coming out of their contract at the

same time... so there's little chance for a group like the original Image Seven to organize. There will be baby steps made from time to time--and I hope to soon be working in an industry where the top talent, as a whole, is creating new things rather than just fueling a corporate entity that's milking 60 year old characters. Characters that I love--so don't get me wrong... but I see no reason there can't be at least a dozen or two top creators actually... y'know, creating stuff on a regular basis.

Anyway, sorry I missed you at the Baltimore Con but my wife is happy that I spent the weekend with her and consequently she still enjoys hearing my recaps of THE WALKING DEAD. Rock on, sir!

Brian Hans

Well, I'm glad your wife is happy! I, on the other hand, was left in the lurch. I was looking forward to seeing you. Jerk.

Dear Kirkman,

Just finished reading issue №53 and I must say it was a good one. I'm not the biggest fan of seeing the cause of a zombie epidemic revealed as the answer tends to be very similar in all zombie stories save a few and is getting very redundant. So I must say that I am hoping that scientist guy bites it at the beginning of the next issue before the big reveal (Now watch the irony unfold as he ends up being one of my favorite characters!). However, if said scientist survives to reveal the cause of the plague, I'm sure you will handle it well. This book has been nothing but great so far and I see it staying that way.

May the dead keep walking,
Adam Davis

Just keep reading. While I'm sure you can tell by now that Eugene didn't die at the opening of issue 54--he hasn't exactly gotten around to spilling the beans about the cause of this zombie epidemic. So there's still some wiggle room there. Also--when he DOES finally give the reason--who knows if he'll be right. Eh? Eh?

Hey Mr. K-

1st time writer to you, long time reader of you. You're my favorite comic writer. I had some questions for you-

1- Are we ever going to learn more about

Glenn's falling out with his parents?
(mentioned early on in series)

Eventually, I'm sure. No plans now.

2- Are you Bruce Brown, the writer of BRIT and if so, why?

I'm really NOT Bruce Brown. I don't know why people would even think I am.

3- If not, who is Bruce Brown?

Bruce is an all-around good guy and talented writer who I met while I was running my publishing company, Funk-O-Tron. He wrote Chaser's Moon in an anthology called "Inkpunks" and that story later continued in back-ups of my title "Battle Pope: Wrath of God." He's done other stuff--and we kept in touch since then. He did write that stuff under the pen name "Kimo" but I assure you're--they're the same guy and I was never writing as either of them.

4- What are your thoughts, if any, on Marvel's pricing policy: \$2.99 direct market, \$3.99 newsstand?

I think it's a necessity for the newsstand market. If a newsstand guy can make more profits off a pack of gum or a magazine then why should they carry comics? Comics are sold for more on the newsstand to justify them occupying the shelf space. At least--that's what I've been told. Just be lucky you know they're cheaper in comic shops.

5- Do you think Marvel is testing the comic market to see if a price hike would hurt comic sales?

I have no idea... seems likely but I really don't know.

6- Is there a price hike coming to your comics?

With the economy in the state it is--I'm thinking NO... but I will say this. When I started reading comics, or rather, when I started shopping at a comic store. BONE was \$2.95... and Image titles were \$2.50... and Marvel and DC books were \$1.95 and maybe even \$1.75 on some titles. As \$2.95 became the standard price for an independent comic--Marvel eventually went to \$2.25... and then \$2.50... and then \$2.95... and then \$2.99.

Independent comics have gone to \$2.99... and some smaller publisher charge \$3.99... which a lot of people say is too expensive. But you see, Marvel & DC have advertising and newsstand and subscription revenue streams that aren't there for independent books... and they, on average, sell far more than an independent book... they should NEVER be the same price.

Now Marvel is selling more and more standard length comics at \$3.99... a dollar MORE than most independent books. That's crazy. That's just not right, frankly... but y'know what--they're smart for selling the books for whatever you'll pay for them.

I will say... if they do eventually bring all their titles to \$3.99... holy SHIT. What happened to \$3.25... or \$3.50... or \$3.75? I mean... that's a HUGE jump. I hope it doesn't cripple the entire comics industry.

Meanwhile... all my titles will remain at a nice \$2.99 for at least a little while longer.

That's all--THANX FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT and KEEP IT UP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

PLORD4EVER

Thanks for writing.

Kirkman,

Okay. I'm nervous as hell now. Last page of No53 "And I know exactly what caused this mess." Part of me thinks this could be great. And then another part thinks this could cause THE WALKING DEAD to come crashing down.

It's like you people are waiting, hoping, expecting this book to jump the shark at any minute! Cut me some slack here guys!

I have seen other books that try to explain where the zombies come from. Sometimes it works (a biological plague got loose, the odd comet came too close to Earth and so on).

And other times not so well (it came from PENGUINS... Penguins I tell you! We're all doomed!).

I have faith in you and this book. If you're going to reveal how the dead have come back I am sure it will be a good explanation... Or at least I hope it will be.

Peace
Eric L. Busby

Continue having faith, please. I won't let you down... or at least--I'll try really goddamn hard not to.

Okay, another issue down... sweet. I'll see you all back here very soon.

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hi Letter Hacks, Amanda here. Some tough stuff we're dealing with in THE WALKING DEAD lately. The end of this issue will lead into one of the great heart-to-hearts in the series as Rick and Abraham learn a little more about each other. More to say in #58, but it's a memorable scene. Stick around! I'll end on something a little lighter, which is my favorite panel in this issue. Carl watching Michonne cleanly decapitate two walkers and just uttering, "Cool." Same, Carl. Same.

This was a tough one. No two ways about it... sometimes writing this comic is hard. Just the panel where Carl's pants are being pulled off—that was really unsettling. I knew it was going to happen, I had it plotted out—but putting it on the screen in my script, well... I cringed a little.

In the script, I felt compelled to assure Charlie that the man trying to rape Carl wouldn't succeed.

Not really sure what point I'm trying to make here... other than there are definitely parts of this comic that Charlie and I do not produce with GLEE.

Speaking of Charlie... last issue was his FIFTIETH issue. That's right, Charlie's been on this sucker for FIFTY issues. That's a heck of a milestone. Congrats, my man—sorry I forgot to mention it last issue. Eventually, I'll have to have someone come in and write six issues so that I can let you catch up.

Speaking of catching up... how about a pat on the back. We've been knocking these issues out in rapid succession, haven't we?

Letters? Letters.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Thank you and congratulations! Like your characters, I find myself very pleased when they/you do good and good in turn is done to them/you. Your new status at Image is well deserved. I can honestly say that you are the jewel in their crown, making the establishment seem all that more friendly.

I write this not to be printed, but to say that you are the nicest creator I have ever met at a convention. I didn't know what to say to you – I was awestruck, as many are when confronted by one of their heroes. You graciously took my omnibus, signed it, then took it to Mr. Adlard to solicit a sketch on my behalf.

I love making Charlie work... it really had nothing to do with you.

There is nothing I can say about The Walking Dead that hasn't been said before; it has elicited the whole range (from reverence to disgust) of emotions that I am capable of experiencing. It works on so many levels.

One question:

There was a panel when the penitentiary was being locked down as the conflict was reaching a crescendo, and in the panel it showed (sorry for my shoddy memory with some of the character's names) the overweight, long haired ex-con calmly walking in the upper level, in the opposite direction—where was he going? Was he going to open the gates...? While it did not amount to anything plot-wise, it scared the bejeezus out of me! Was that intentional, or was my mind making much of nothing? It just attests to the heightened awareness obtained while being engrossed in the world of TWD or in the trying times in life. But was it intentional? It works if it was or wasn't – that is why I love your books that much.

Regards,
Robert

The only panel I could find that matched your description... is one where Axel is on the tower keeping watch. He's not walking—just standing there—keeping an eye on the horizon for The Governor and his men.

P.S. Look for me at a future con, with the 2nd Omnibus volume!

Will do!

Dear Robert Kirkman,

Terrifying, horrible, grizzly, brutal... awesome!

The last time I wrote to a letters column was to Bernie Wrightson and the original Swamp Thing! As mentioned by others, I can't pull out of the parking lot before finishing the latest The Walking Dead release!

I look forward to TWD becoming an ongoing TV series, similar to Lost.

You and me both, pal!

I also enjoy tantalizing unanswered questions like: Why does it seem like the time it takes for conversion into zombies vary? Why does conversion appear to be happening more rapidly as time goes by?

Sometimes it's rapid, sometimes it's not... it depends on how the person dies, how quickly, how weak they are when they die... there's a method to it, I swear.

Would it be possible (or make any sense) to devote an issue to the perspective of a newly converted individual into the zombies? What is their perception of the world and of the living? What's going on in their brain? Is there anything left, any sense of anything (even Sophia said they looked sad)? There has to be something there – even a mosquito has a perspective of the world, even though its overt behavior is dominated by bloodlust.

People ask for this a lot... but I think it would be a pretty lame issue... it'd be completely silent—and wouldn't really have much of a point. Zombies are mindless...

they don't have an inner monologue or anything.

Could the zombies be more than reanimated, mindless, rotting corpses, which logically would eventually “run out of gas” with decomposition? Could there be more to this transformation than meets the eyes of the living? Is the preoccupation with feeding and cannibalism a means to an end? Could there be ongoing metamorphosis leading to, god forbid, resurrection?

No... there couldn't be. This book just isn't about the zombies. Don't expect any huge revelations or changes in their behavior... nothing huge I mean... we'll learn a little bit more about them as the series progresses—but none of them are going to sprout wings or grow to fifty feet tall.

Thanks for the series. The story, the characters, the art, and the cliffhangers are perfect and priceless! It doesn't get any better than this!

Sincerely,
Mark

Thanks for reading.

Mr Kirkman:

The Walking Dead is great storytelling... better than most novels. It's literature, with lots of pictures (or literature partially via pictures...or something). And those poor characters...you're so good at putting them through hardship... it's so unfair!

I just got into comics recently (about a year ago)...I'm a manic novel-reader, but now I'm finding that comic books are an amazing medium for storytelling. I DID read some comics as a kid (Ninja Turtles in elementary school and Jhonen Vasquez's stuff just after high-school (I saw Vasquez as an anomaly, not as a regular comics-book artist, so it didn't inspire me to look for other comics)) but it wasn't until I started reading the Madman series and Darkhorse's Conan series that I fell in love with the art and stories of the comics world (Conan is

another long tale with more depth than might be expected...just like TWD!). Then I started reading everything Grendel-related, Stephen King's Dark Tower comics (Why'd he pick Marvel? Oh well, they're doing a great job!), Spawn, random graphic novels...and now the soul-wrenching, heart-breaking, brain-boggling drug that is The Walking Dead. I borrowed all 53 issues from a friend who urgently pushed them on me. Just before writing this I read №38-53 in one sitting (and I almost threw up several times... but I kept reading out of what I assume must be masochism...), but now I've got to wait a whole month between each issue! I want them all now! Write them all now!

Anyway, the purpose of the letter is to thank you for being one of the people who make comics a great medium. By doing good work you'll inspire good work, and it's great that you'll be more influential with Image now, and I'm sure you'll find some great new talents to keep us happy. My compliments to Mr. Adlard and Mr. Rathburn as well, who bring your stories to life. This is all good for comics, and good for art in general.

Lemme ask a few quick questions:

1) Grendel is a viciously independent comic...are you a fan? (You should get Matt Wagner to work for Image!)

Big fan of Grendel and a huge fan of Matt Wagner in general. Matt's done some work here in the past, his MAGE series has found a home here—I hope he'll continue it soon.

2) Are you a Stephen King fan? I bet he's a you-fan.

I wouldn't be so sure. I just recently started reading Stephen King... my dad was always a huge fan. I'm really enjoying it so far.

3) The Spider-Man movies were an unacceptable travesty! (It's not a question and it has nothing to do with you, but I repeat that line thrice a day...Spider-Man is so cool, and those movies sucked so much! Peter Parker is a hyper-smart smart-aleck nerd, not a dopey crybaby like in the film. Un-redeemable!)

Eh... the first two were awesome. I could

arm-chair quarterback the shit out of the third movie but it's still at least watchable... and the action is cool. I love me some Sam Raimi... I enjoy all his movies.

4) Any chance Image will be taking on any sci-fi endeavors (aside from Red Mass for Mars, which is gonna be too short!)? Comic sci-fi is always (always!!!!) cheesy cyber-punk...but it has the potential to equal Schild's Ladder and The Inverted World... sci-fi offers such storylines, such visuals, and it's such an open-ended genre...can you make it happen? Read The Inverted World by Christopher Priest (he wrote the book that The Prestige was based on) and you'll see that the comic world has employed criminal neglect in the sci-fi field. OR can you at least suggest a good sci-fi comic, if one exists?

I'm developing a few sci-fi series, but I'm uncertain when they'll see the light of day. I'm a big fan of the genre. Off to top of my head—I really can't think of any really good sci-fi comics... but I'm sure they're just slipping my mind.

So, keep up the good work. And even though I borrowed all the current comics for free, I will be buying each new issue, AND I have a brother who's getting some TWD collections/Omnibuses (omnibi?) for Christmas.

As long as we're getting your money NOW... all is forgiven.

I can't wait for the "all out action" in №54...bullets and zombie-blood!

And Rick and Michonne need to take over a castle! That would be the perfect anti-zombie stronghold.

OK bye.
Matt Payne

A castle, hmmmmmm? There aren't a lot of those in The United States.

Dear "Babykiller" Kirkman,

Despite your dire warnings, it always felt like Rick might be the one character who was "safe"—I mean, he's been our

connection to the story from the start. But at this point, with everything you've taken from him, killing him off would almost be a mercy. Just don't turn him into a goddamn zombie.

As much as I missed the letters, it was good to read the interviews in the last few issues. I had heard the jokes about bringing aliens into the storyline, but never knew it was a prank you had pulled in your story pitch. Funny! Anyhoo, way back when, you issued a call for zombie movie suggestions. I don't recall if any of these have been mentioned:

Braindead (or Dead Alive). How in the world did Peter Jackson get to make The Frighteners, let alone the Lord of the Rings trilogy? I suppose Dead Alive is a fun gory movie—we're talking ridiculous, way, way over-the-top gore – but as a zombie movie it's just silly.

Dead and Deader. (Starring TV's superman, Dean Cain!) It's got some hot chick! And a black comic-relief sidekick! Yeah, this one's also just silly.

Fido. Now this is a brilliant zombie movie...funny, gory, and yet charmingly sweet. (A description I didn't think I'd ever use outside of Shaun of the Dead.) I'm not spoiling anything here – Set in a 1950s-ish America, the opening "newsreel" sequence reveals that a zombie plague erupted, but was contained by the government. Zombies now wear electric collars and are used for menial labor. The movie offers a truly original take on the genre, which you don't often see. And there's some nice social commentary/satire if you want to pay attention to it. Stars Carrie-Anne Moss, Tim Blake Nelson, Billy Connelly, and Dylan Baker. Buy it. Right now.

Dexter Midnight

Thanks for the suggestions, man. I think I might go out and get Fido right now.

Mr. Kirkman,

There seems to be a bit of complaints about the length of the issues, though

while I wouldn't mind a longer read, I love that each one still moves the story along while leaving you at a point in which you're dying to pick up the next issue. Honestly, that's how a comic book should read, especially one of this nature. That said, you've stated many times you want The Walking Dead to go on forever, so I assume this Washington business isn't going to end well? I suppose that's a given. Though will they even hint at what that "classified information" is?

Eventually, yes.

Also, I'm glad to see your response that Andrea and Dale are safe for the moment, though what about Michonne? She seems to get a bit of hate from the fans, at least people I've talked to, though she's actually come to be one of my favorites. So what are the chances of her making it for a bit longer? Are they going to actually reach Washington? That thing about the generator going out almost seems like a "that's what they think" moment. Either way, can't wait for the next issue.

Asia Sorenson

There's a series of questions I can't really answer without giving things away. Did I say Andrea and Dale are safe for a while? Oops.

Dear Robert,

Just finished issue №54. Abraham kicks ass! It's cool you have a soldier in the group. When are you going to kill him? Seriously, try to keep him around for a while. At least five or six more issues.

I'll do my best... no promises.

Dear Charlie,

I don't understand why people can't tell the characters apart. They all look different to me. You do a great job and I enjoy your art.

(I'll answer for Charlie) Thanks, old boy. Top of the morning to you. Cheers! Pip pip! (Charlie is British).

Dear Robert (again),

I was at Zombie Con in North Carolina a couple of weeks ago and I turned some people onto The Walking Dead. I would've thought if you were at a show called Zombie Con you would've already been reading it, but whatever. Anyway, thanks for writing this book.

Until Abraham starts carrying a trash can lid around as a shield and calling Carl "Bucky," Make Mine Kirkman.

Rob Shelor

So... until next issue then?

Kirkman-

Thanks for printing my previous letters. To be included in the pages of issue 50 was really cool, I even nerded out and bought both covers.

YAY!

Just a quick question this time: For those of us who have faithfully read every Letter Hacks since early issues (No 19 in my case) how are we supposed to feel suspense at this new plot line? You've stated on multiple occasions that you don't plan on revealing the cause of the zombie outbreak, so...we already know this new "scientist" character isn't going to be right, or will never get the chance to prove his theory etc...Unless you've lied to us all this time?! Or perhaps you're writing this with the folks who only buy the trades in mind?

Maybe I was saying that to throw you off—or maybe that's the LEAST important part of the upcoming storyline... either way, you shouldn't be disappointed.

Don't get me wrong, I'm excited about both the new characters, and Dale, Andrea, and the rest hitting the road again, I'm just a little disappointed in their reasons for hitting the road.

The reason is going to Washington... that should be at least somewhat exciting.

That small complaint/question aside, I really like how you're handling Rick's transition from being the "leader," but Abraham is no Tyreese. I hope you let Dale and Andrea "lead" for awhile... though I sense that there might be conflict in the future between Dale and Abraham over Andrea...

It's great to still be so excited about where this story, and Invincible are going! Not an easy thing to accomplish for over fifty issues I'm sure.

Take care,
Adam Mitchell

I'm just thankful you guys are all still interested at all. I feel very lucky to still be able to do all my books.

Okay... another issue down. I'll see you back here next month for issue 58... GUARANTEED!

—Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, readers! Amanda here. Another issue down, and for not being a father myself, I do feel like this issue gives a depressing, emotional glimpse at what being a dad in the apocalypse would be like, and it's enough to make you second-guess parenthood. To all the dads doing their best out there, I applaud you. This mini detour for our group isn't over yet, and things are about to get dicey. See you in two weeks' time for an issue you won't want to miss. Until then, some classic Letter Hacks for your reading pleasure below.

Welcome to issue 58 of The Walking Dead. My god, it seems like only yesterday I was writing issue 50 and now we're already reaching issue 60. Heck, it's all just flying by.

Well, let's do some letter answering, shall we?

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Thanks for another great issue (55). Just when I thought we were going to get 50 issues free of death to balance out the first 50, wham-o! The suicide fairy strikes again. I hope this time her visit is brief. Not to make light of the tragedy, mind you. My condolences to THE WALKING DEAD gang. While suicide is used by some to escape life's tragedies, I imagine it won't be as kind to the survivors.

I pay you this simple yet powerful compliment: Once again you have made me wonder what is going to happen next. Although judging from your comment in the previous letter column that we'll never find out what caused the zombies,

I assume the slightly overweight, slightly too curious, slightly creepy government scientist is next in line to eat it.

You never know...

A couple questions/humble demands:

1. Can you please print Lori's phone number? I, like Rick, have some questions about the afterlife. I'd be willing to pay at least 15 cents a minute for such a call.

I'll see what I can do.

2. Can you please have a character with contact lenses? Please. No matter how many post-apocalyptic scenarios I've checked out, I've never seen one where someone wears contacts and has to deal with scrounging up refills, getting solution, keeping them clean, and using an old pair of glasses that constantly slides down the nose with slightest bit of nose sweats. Every time I see a disaster situation played out I always ask myself what I would do about my contacts. I want to see a character go through this dilemma so I'll know how to deal.

It's not a bad idea, really... and it's not like I haven't thought of this kind of thing before. The hunt for toothpaste, etc. The problem is the more you dwell on the mundane the more tedious the book could get... and once you crack that egg open—it starts to become obvious how much other stuff I'm ignoring. I mean there are so many little things it's assumed that they have without ever showing where they get them.

Tampons anyone?

I think some things are better left unsaid. Also, the contact issue ends with someone just using glasses... or being blind. You

couldn't find new contacts in the correct prescription—it would be impossible. Solution alone would be hard to keep stocked.

I know the nuance of living in this world and the minutia of life is a large driving force of what makes this comic interesting—but y'know, gotta walk a fine line there, gotta keep things interesting.

3. Can the gang hide out in an abandoned Chuck E. Cheese? I bet they'd have a blast.

Those animatronic animal things would be totally creepy.

4. Do they have enough toilet paper?

Man... you just don't stop. Toilet paper was actually mentioned a couple times in the first few issues. I try not to dwell. Now you've got me thinking about doing "the most boring episode of The Walking Dead yet!" Start with Rick taking a dump in the woods, end with him going to sleep... hmmm. Maybe we'll see how you like that.

5. What year is the story currently in? Have they already seen how Lost ends? If not, I can take all the other stuff that they've been through, but that's a little cruel.

It's set in modern times... but the book started in 2003 and only a year has passed in the book. But that doesn't mean it's 2004 in the book... maybe it's 2009... who knows... who really cares. I don't want to be specific.

6. Please endorse me.

What the hell does this mean? Are you running for office?

7. How come we haven't seen a Waffle House yet? Bert's Chili is great!

Never had Bert's Chili... I'm an all-star special man myself.

Also, I noticed the issue of lateness keeps being addressed. Maybe I'm living in

a time warp, but it feels to me like the issues have been coming out every other week. If they were to come out any faster I'd have adjust my budget and drop Superman and Batman versus Vampires and Werewolves or Spider-Man: European Vacation.

Have a great holiday!
Eddie

Eh, the book was never really that late to begin with. Sporadic maybe sure, but in the end, we put out a lot of issues. Now though, I'm trying to get an issue out every month—like clockwork. I think before people complained simply because they were sick of waiting for the book... now they'll have nothing to complain about.

Hi Gentlemen,

This one's for Charlie. I read 40-50 comics per month, and have been doing so for 20+ years. I'm that guy. I've read THE WALKING DEAD since issue №1 hit the stands, and have been following all of your books for years, Mr. Kirkman. But I just put down THE WALKING DEAD №55, and I have to tell Charlie Adlard, after 48(?) beautifully drawn issues, that I think he's finally, and beautifully outdone himself.

The book is a clinic in storytelling, and probably could have no dialogue at all (no offense Robert), and be utterly easy to understand from panel- to-panel, and page-to-page. This is one of the finest issues of the book, if not the very best, because it does everything the book as a whole does so well: sets the tone for the story from the outset, gives us further insight into the psychological progression and sadness that increasingly permeates the book, and shows us why the world was, is, and will always be so frightening, even when there are no zombies at all. Charlie Adlard's beautiful linework, exquisite panel choices, perfect use of shadow and darkness, and complete control and nuance of facial features make this story work on every level (Mr.

Rathburn's gray tones are especially noticeable and sharp as well). Look at the beautiful rendering of the treetops at night, or the panel-by-panel progression of Rick's face while on the phone with the entirety of his own loss. It's about as good as the medium gets. And this issue is why comics is a place for unique storytelling all its own. Here's to your much deserved Eisner, Mr. Adlard. I like you too, Robert, and the rest of the gang. This book's a rare pleasure for its honesty, and all that the word entails.

My very best,
Chris Martin

I'm in complete agreement on the matter of Charlie's immense talent. He's one super-talented dude. I hope to continue working with Charlie for years and years to come. I would send him this letter but it's late and this issue needs to go to print. I know Charlie skims these letters columns for his name (and reads little else...) so I know he'll see this.

Hello Mr. Kirkman!

I'm a relatively new comics reader of about 2 years (I'm 27) and an even newer reader of TWD. I'd never read a single piece of zombie literature in my life up until when I picked up the Vol. 1 TPB on a whim about 2 weeks ago. I then proceeded to devour the remaining 7 TPBs within a week's time with the same level of insatiable, zombie-crazed appetite as the creatures in your story. I am now reduced to waiting for a month between issues like the rest of the herd. :(I found myself empathizing with the flesh-starved, exhausted zombie that the travelers discovered in issue №55. I simply cannot get enough now!

I'm glad to hear that the issues will ship out regularly, which is such a nice treat in this day and age. Thanks a bunch for all your hard work and effort. Issue №55 was one of your best single issues to date. That ending was a doozy! I look forward to feeding again next month with №56 ...

Do you foresee more religious overtones entering the book at any point with any of the characters? After all, it is only a matter of time before a pair of zombie Mormon missionaries come by to "convert" Rick and the others ...

-Chitty

Religion will always play a role of some kind in the book—it will take a somewhat more front and center role starting very soon... for at least some time. Look for it.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I'd like to start by saying that THE WALKING DEAD is the best comic I've ever read. It was also the book that introduced me to the other great series that you write. Lately, I've been going to the comic shop and just buying anything with your name on it. Where do you find the time to put out all these comics? Anyway, on to the questions...

1) On the last page of issue №55, it shows that Maggie apparently hangs herself. When I turn a couple pages to check out the preview for next month's issue, there's Maggie (among others) on the cover!!!! This confused the hell outta me until I did some research (ok so all I did was go to www.image.com) and found out that issue 56 is just gonna be some kind of retrospective type deal. I need to know what happens next. WTF BOB?!?

Well, you know now that Maggie in fact, didn't die. Sorry for the confusion.

2) What is the purpose of the zombie that was too weak to move in 55? Are you using it to show that the zombies can only "survive" for a few months as undead and that the first people that turned are starting to die off? Are our heroes going to find some new way to fend them off? Please tell me that this doesn't signify the beginning of the end (of the series).

This series is not ending any time soon.

Don't worry. The zombie in issue 55 was just a small hint as to the nature of the zombies existence and will lead to more eventually. Stay tuned.

3) Being a huge fan of INVINCIBLE, I was excited to hear about you and Cory Walker working together again on the Destroyer book. My question is, if you are a partner at Image now, why are you putting that book out under Marvel?

(Here's a good opportunity to talk about how great I am. -Aubrey)

I'm leaving Aubrey's comment in there just to show what a good editor he's being by giving me subjects to discuss in the letters column. Destroyer is a book editor supreme, Aubrey Sitterson, put together at Marvel before either of us left that fine company. So it's something I had written entirely well before Marvel and I parted ways. After Cory and I did issues 7 and 8 of The Irredeemable Ant-Man for Aubrey at Marvel, Aubrey came to me with the idea of reviving DESTROYER for the MAX line and having Cory and I do the book. It was a blast to do the series and I'm very proud of it. I think you'll all enjoy it. I'm happy to report Cory is currently working on issue 4 of the series, and it will be starting in April.

4) When are you taking back over writing duties on Brit? After reading the first trade, I was pretty pumped about having another ongoing series to look forward to every month. But after reading a few issues, I just couldn't get into it and stopped buying them. I'm just not into this Bruce Brown guy's style of writing. Sorry dude.

No, I'm sorry it's not your cup of tea. I think it's a pretty excellent series, but it is coming to an end with issue 12, which should already be out. You'll be happy to know that I did co-write the last issue as well as write a 10 page back-up featuring the origin of Brit. Check it out. There will be more Brit eventually... but the form it will take is still undecided.

Anyway, thanks for giving me

something to spend money on every week and good luck in your new position at Image!!!

-Bob Lavay

Thanks! I need all the luck I can get. So far it's been great—big plans for the future.

Robert-

Why can we "hear" Lori's voice when Rick talks to her on the phone?

I understand WHY he's talking to her and I totally buy it, but it just seems weird that we as readers have access to the voices in his head.

We never heard whom Michonne was talking to and it seems that up until now we've been kinda like flies on the wall in terms of witnessing the unfolding story. This new development feels WAY more interactive than the rest of the series and I think it is a little off-putting ...

I dunno ... I guess I'm mainly just curious about the inclusion of this particular narrative device.

Any thoughts?

I could argue that Rick is the central character of the book and so it would be impossible to have told this part of his story without allowing you to hear Lori—and I'd be right too. Is it a bit inconsistent, yes, and I'm sorry if you find it off putting... I just didn't see any other way to tell the story in an effective way.

-Hank

P.S. I also understand that in savage and unjust times (such as what is seen in THE WALKING DEAD) people would certainly suffer from unfathomable injuries made worse by the absence of any medical professionals, but I was curious if, based on the outcome of many characters, you perhaps had a little bit of an amputee fetish?

(Another opportunity to talk about why you hired me, pervert. –Aubrey)

And the truth comes out. I hired Aubrey because he is indeed an amputee.

Zee Robert Kirkman,

When I was 10 I used to love the Batman comics. Before I could get heavy into comics my parents moved and I never bought another one. 13 years later, about a year ago, I'm in the middle of the ocean on a US Naval warship bored out of my mind when I see my friend DJ reading THE WALKING DEAD: Vol 1 & 2. I'm a huge fan of anything related to zombies, so even though I figured comics to be for kids, I had to ask him about it.

After we got done talking, and DJ got done reading, he let me borrow it. The first chance I had I went online and bought all the volumes available. I loved them so much I started buying issues and I'm always pissed when I reach the end because I want more. DJ and I talking even caused other people we work with to read your work and they loved it too. It's hard not to love Zed.

Now I'm venturing out into other comic series to see what's out there and I'm enjoying it. One thing that DJ and I talked about was how we always thought zombie movies and books had a 99% chance of going wrong when they solved the Z mystery/started to turn the story into how Zed became Zed. Because of this I really hope that new character is full of crap or you are that 1%. Maybe it's a little of both.

We'll see! At the very least—we got at least 60 or so good issues out before it went downhill—right? Right?

DJ and I also think this would make a kick-ass HBO mini-series. If you have any suggestions on other comics please let me know.

Y: The Last Man... The Sword... Wasteland... Fell... Criminal... I'm trying to recommend books that would appeal to you if you dig The Walking Dead. There are plenty of great books out there right now.

Congratulations on 50+ and becoming a part of Image.

Thank you,
Dan

PS: I don't suppose there is a way that I would be able to buy any of the original artwork would I? I like collecting art and would love to add a comic to my non-existent comic art collection.

There certainly is. If you go to www.splashpageart.com and go to the Charlie Adlard section you'll find a bevy of his art there. Also, Tony Moore still has a surprising number of pages left for sale from issues 1-6 of this series (at least, last time I checked) so you could hit www.tonymooreillustration.com if you wanted some of that.

Well, with that—another issue down. Cool. See you all back here next month.

—Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

I hope you're running, readers! Amanda here, and we've all heard the stories, but now we've got our first visual of a herd in the world of THE WALKING DEAD! Even though these walkers are slow, Charlie and Dave do a great job capturing just how quickly claustrophobic a herd can get, and how plowing through all that dead weight (heh) can really slow you down and kill a car. The question now becomes not whether the group can outrun the herd, but if they can outlast it...

We're approaching the end of a story arc, so if you've got your burning questions, like why the heck did Eugene keep that mullet? Now's the time to write in! Until then, your regular dose of classic Letter HACKS.

And here we are at issue 59. What fun. Big stuff in store for this book. Big stuff. I'm really looking forward to getting there.

So let's not waste any time. Letters.

Mr. Kirkman-

Just read issue No57. I love this comic so I have to tell you, don't you fucking dare kill Carl! You've got a kid, you sick bastard so you know Rick will be fucked too. Just please don't do it. Please.

Matt Coppins

You dare me? I'll do it... I swear I will!

Hi Robert,

This is literally the first time I've ever written fanmail to anybody. I only found out about your comic through some zombie internet link - I never knew it existed until about a week ago. You'll be glad to hear that I'm already up to date with the series. It is hands-down the best zombie media I've ever come across. It's so open ended it's perfect. You have the freedom to continue the story as long as you need too, where I always feel that same bite of annoyance with ANY zombie film, because they all have to end

and the end is 99% of the time either they all die or the military save their asses! But with this you've shown us what its like for the few who survive longest, because they would! There would always be SOME survivors out there.

Right on.

I know there are other zombie comics out there, but none of them have the gritty realism of this one - you've really hit something here man! One thing I was wondering is if you have any plans to make a TV series (note I don't say film for the obvious above reasons) but a TV show could totally work and it'd be the best shit ever!

Here's hoping.

Anyways I hope you print this, It'd be dead good! LOL

Your pal,
Connor

(By the way, I'm in Ireland here. Not sure if you've got any mail from this far afield yet?)

I don't keep track... Ireland, seems like I have but who knows. You might be special... but probably not. My wife has always wanted to visit your fine country.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

First off, thanks for rejuvenating my interest in the comic book genre after 30 years away. Zombies rule.

A question for you though, that I'm wondering if you'll address ...

Gasoline, when not used, tends to deteriorate after several months, eventually turning into a rather nasty varnish-like substance. After a year, the gas will burn very poorly and even damage an engine with gummy deposits. After five years, it's a pretty safe bet that most of the available gasoline would be unusable, creating a new challenge for our survivors. Are you going to address this or am I just being a nitpicky pain in the ass? This is driving me crazy.

Keep up the great work,
JD Ryan

We've all heard this before! Lame! They've only been at this a year, I'm thinking they'll be out of gasoline entirely before we hit the five year mark. We're fudging things a bit, to be sure... but y'know, the dead don't usually get up and walk around in real life either? I do try to keep things as realistic as possible, so I really appreciate comments like this and I don't mean to just casually dismiss them. They won't be using gasoline eventually in the book... unless they're able to refine and make their own.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

That was a great issue. First off, how do I word this without sounding like a pedophile ... thank you? I understand that rape, especially with children, is a difficult subject to write, but the fact that you did it and pulled it off really made this comic stand out as one of the best things I've ever read. More often than not, writers skip things like that, or allude to it, and I appreciate that you had the balls to include it in TWD. Anyway, the reason I'm writing is I had a few questions.

1.) I understand zombies aren't the point of TWD, but is there any chance we'll see some kind of evolving from them? I was thinking along the lines of intelligence as in Land of the Dead, not actual growth.

The zombies will not evolve. I've lifted enough from Romero. What is happening though--is that we'll slowly learn more and more about the zombies and how they work as we go along. The unique, weak zombie recently found is an indication of things to come.

2.) Do zombies grow? Like, if someone turns as a teenager and they survive, say, 10 years, are they going to still look like a teenager?

Yes. They would always stay the same age. The body is not functioning the way a living body does. The cells are not regenerating like ours do (or whatever that's called).

3.) Why is Rick willing to travel to D.C. when he knows cities are insanely infested with zombies, and he wants to keep Carl safe?

Time has passed... if any city in the world would be cleaned up by now--logically, it would be D.C. I'm sure he'll still be cautious... if they make it there.

4.) Finally, I know you've mentioned that you do have an end in mind for this series ... This

doesn't have anything to do with the whole "going to DC because I know what started the plague" thing, right? I'd like to see TWD make it to at least Issue №100, if not №150.

That's all.
Joseph Jobes

The story doesn't end in Washington... assuming they even make it there.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

That was the literally the most horrific thing I have ever seen or read. It made me cry. Please, please stop being mean to Rick and Carl. I don't think I can take it.

Your Fan,
Jonny Lang

Yeah, I'll probably have to back off sooner or later.

Kirkman,

I've been reading a few issues of TWD. Here in Mexico it's fucking hard, near impossible, to find the comic. You need to improve the distribution - the few I have cost me near 10 dollars for each 3 dollar issue. That's damn expensive, you need to bring this shit to Mexico.

I'll see what I can do.

I have a few questions

1. Can dead animals also become zombies, like horses or deer?

Nope. Just the peeps.

2. Are you going to tell us what caused the damn infection?

That would be telling. It remains to be seen. Stick with it.

3. Are you planning to make a videogame of TWD?

Well, that's not up to me, but I'd LOVE to do that if anyone out there is in the industry and interested... get in touch.

I also have a complaint: you shouldn't have kill Axel ... too soon.

Well, that's all. Hope you print this.
Jorge Ruelas

Yeah... I'm right there with you on Axel... I miss that guy... a lot.

Dear Comrade Kirkman,

I just wanted you to know that your little comic book has driven me INSANE! My life is in SHAMBLES! My girlfriend is ready to leave me if I don't stop talking about the latest issue. I can't eat. I can't sleep. I'm like one of your so beautifully illustrated zombies, I HUNGER FOR MORE! The sad thing about all of this is that I only started reading TWD about a week ago. I finished all 57 issues in a little over a week. It has gotten a little out of control fast. I must say though, in all seriousness, that this comic has officially turned me on to comics. Of course I had read plenty of superhero comics in my day, but this comic has ruined me. I'm afraid to pick up anything else. Afraid it's just going to be a let-down. I have found myself for the first time ever, caring for characters in a book. The strange thing is, I'm an avid reader. I couldn't begin to count the novels and short stories I've read over the years, but never have I ever found myself saddened by a characters death or misfortune. I applaud you Mr. Kirkman. You are truly a master of your craft.

Pretty much anything by Garth Ennis and Brian K. Vaughan would kind of blow The Walking Dead out of the water... I mean, let's be honest. I kick the shit out of Bendis though.

It's also nice to see such a quality publication come out of Kentucky. I live in a very small town in Western Kentucky and it gets a little old having everyone think nothing comes out of this state but meth addicts and backwood racist rednecks. It's very refreshing.

Oh, yeah... how do you explain Abraham Lincoln, Johnny Depp, George Clooney, or Larry Flynt?!

Also props to Adlard, Rathburn, and Wooton for their contribution to the publication as well. Keep up the good work guys, and I'll be on pins and needles until the next issue.

Grant Stanley

Yeah... don't forget to mention THOSE guys.

Dear Kirkman,

Thanks for releasing the issues in rapid succession. It's something I've never had a problem with though - as long as the quality remains the same, I can wait.

Good, because it'll soon be "Late as sin in 2010." This year is killing me!

Issue №57 struck a cord with me; we've seen all sorts of horror in the book but somehow the incident with Carl seems like the most poignant yet (and that's saying something). Rick's helplessness could not have been portrayed better. In his desperation to free his son, he had to enact what his primary threat has been doing all along. Justified, given the situation, but also further mirroring the survivors and the walking dead. This has been another horrible moment to witness in the series, but as always compelling.

This book has been my new Preacher in the sense that I can loan it off to friends and colleagues that aren't into comics to begin with and in every case they've headed out to their local LCS for the first time and bought the trades. It is the added twist of indie publishing that also drives them to it - not unlike buying music and apparel from an indie band in order to support them directly. It's important to point out how rewarding this is to consumers. You should be very proud of this achievement.

As for Charlie, Cliff & Rus, you could not have a more perfect team for this book's visuals. Stunning work all around, keep it up!

Thank you,
Simon Mallette

Thanks for all the kind words, Simon.

Mr. Kirkman,

The Walking Dead is awesome.

Okay... good start, keep going...

I wanted to keep this letter absurdly short so it would fit the motif of your newly shrunk letters column.

Thanks for the zombies.
Jason

Wow... I shouldn't print this out of spite -- but I will anyway, because this letter sucks! Don't be like Jason, kids. Write GOOD letters... please!

Okay, better luck next time. See you in a few.

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hi there, readers, Amanda here. This issue had a little bit of everything: walkers, early “totally a red flag” serial killer behavior from Ben, romantic tension, and finally a chilling note to end this story arc on. I think Dale’s being bitter and a little delusional here, but Rick is stepping back into his role as leader more and more... so trouble’s a-brewin’. What this also means is that we’re answering new letters next issue and we’ve got an all-new connecting cover set for you, this time from the incredible Stephanie Hans! It’s a beautifully haunting set for a haunting upcoming arc... not to scare you or anything. For now, enjoy some classic letters from back in the days you could friend Robert on MySpace, and we’ll see you back here for #61!

Okay, issue 60... the big six-o... if we were a person, we’d be nearing retirement age! Ha! Anyway, we have no intention of slowing down, in fact, I hope you’ve all noticed just how much we’ve sped up. As of typing this, we’ve hit all our dates in 2009 so far and show no signs of missing any coming up (as I type this 61 is in the can and Charlie is already hard at work on 62).

Good times.

So let’s answer a little mail here.

Mr. Kirkman,

First, I just want to say again (cuz I know I put this in my first letter to you as well) that you are hands-down my favorite writer right now. I have been reading everything you write and all of it has been golden.

I just finished issue №58 of The Walking Dead... geez. I thought the LAST issue was crazy! I am supremely happy that Rick and Abraham had the conversation that they did. I thought Abraham was going to become a problem and Rick was going to have to kill him. Now I am really starting to like Abraham (which of course means he will die). The scene in the beginning where Rick, Abraham and Carl had their talk...it almost brought me to tears. The rest of the comic could have been empty and I would have been ok with that. That first part is one of my all-time favorites now from the entire series.

Cool, I’m glad people are liking Abraham as much as I do. When I conceived his character... before ever actually writing him, I had a MUCH different arc planned for him. You guys should press for me to tell that story in a letter’s column sometime. I’m glad I

scrapped the whole plan.

I was happy to see Morgan again, but not at all surprised that his son had been turned. I WAS surprised however to see that he had not killed him and had in fact been feeding him...that was a little disturbing. It may make me sound heartless but I would have shot him in a second. But then again, I am prepared for when the zombies come, lol.

You never know...

One last question, then I am all done...Why haven’t you accepted my friend invite on MySpace? j/k

Because I’m extremely inconsistent with my myspace visits. I sometimes do go to the site for months on end—and friend invites just sit there.

Your ever loyal reader and comic store employee,

Jessica Mikesch (yes I am a girl)

Yay for girls!

Dearest Kirkman,

I love your book. I love you. I’ve never written a letter before. (Sounding familiar?)

It’s pretty cool knowing you live around the shithole town of Richmond, Kentucky. It was even cooler seeing Barnes Mill road referenced in The Walking Dead.

Man... where’d I do that? I don’t even remember. And hey—Richmond isn’t a shithole!

To the point, though.

I’m finishing up a degree in creative writing here at Eastern Kentucky University and wanted to let you know that your book has profoundly affected my writing. I don’t write shitty zombie stories or fan-fiction, but your storytelling is top notch and almost makes me want to. (I promise I won’t.) That’s not due to the plot, it’s because of your characters and character development. Some people don’t get that. It’s not always plot, it’s the characters that make the story. I think I could read a whole issue about Rick shitting in a hole just because I like his character and because, of course, Adlard and Rathburn make him look so sexy. (I also promise I’m not into scat.)

This letter took a turn...

To the questions and requests now.

1. Please do another spread with all the character's pictures and whether they've bit it or not. It was cool seeing how many people you've killed. This was my friend Tristan's idea. (That guy who worked at Hastings and would awkwardly try to talk to you.)

Oh, yeah... I remember him. I'll try to do that soon... it's a busy time for the book.

2. Will you be coming to Eastern again to lecture? I missed the first one for whatever reason. I'd like to hear it.

I haven't been asked. I might do it if they asked again.

3. Please don't let Hollywood fuck The Walking Dead and leave it behind, bitter and broken.

Projecting, much? You want to talk about it?

4. I know you've read John Joseph Adams' The Living Dead because your quote is on the back of it, but have you read Wastelands? It's incredible. Especially the story "Still Life With Apocalypse." It sets my mind on fire.

Haven't read Wastelands... might have to look that up.

5. Shout out to Keith who ran Warlords Unlimited here in Richmond. He was a cool dude. I miss him.

Did he die?

AND.

6. Most Important. Seriously. Soon, someone at Comic Oasis will ask you if you have some back issues of TWD including №55. Please give №55 up. I need it as much as you need store credit. Thanks, man.

Man... this letter is almost useless to anyone outside of Richmond. I think I've already done this, but if I haven't just tell Ron to bug me about it.

That's it. If I see you here in Richmond sometime I'll probably just stare at you awkwardly and from a distance. I hear I can (unfortunately) resemble David Spade, so if you see me staring at you give me a wave.

I'll just have my security people remove you—no big deal. Stare away!

Take it easy man and keep up the good work. I'll send you a copy of my book if I ever get it out of my head.

Your friend,
Matt McAlister

Good luck with it.

Dear Kirkman,

The Walking Dead №58 wasn't really UNTHINKABLE, although when you flashed this issue's cover last month I'm sure most of us were misled into thinking that Rick was about to lose Carl. What I would call this issue is HEARTBREAKING. For some reason, Morgan and Duane who had appeared only twice in this series before, had somehow lived on in my head, in a bubble of hope and safety. Now that bubble has burst, and the landscape looks somehow bleaker.

Have you heard of Zack Snyder's new studio? It's called Cruel and Unusual Films. Cruel and unusual... just like this series. I have to be a masochist. As I told you in person at San Diego Comic-Con, I've been here since issue №6, and this series is still my favorite. Looking forward to the Washington story.

Victor Rosario Fermaid

Yeah, Zack was telling me all about it the other day...

Baby-Killer,

It's the week of Valentines Day (issue №58) and I don't have a woman. Since I can't blame myself I'm going to blame you. I'm not an ugly guy. I have my own house, a job that pays well, I'm still young and I have my health. But, there's something about a 24-year-old dude that reads baby-killing comics that drives some women away. But, you have a woman and you don't just read comics...you write them. Since you have a kid, that's proof that you get some. I'm jealous. Does she know you're a baby-killer? In retrospect...it might not have been you. It might have been me when I called Jesus the first zombie. Don't just take my word for it. Dictionary.com says, "noun: a dead body that has been brought back to life by a supernatural force."

Y'know, writing comics is way cooler than just reading them. There's a hierarchy to this. It'd be easier for me to get chicks. Sheesh. Anyway, good luck with it. You're still young, there's time.

Numbered question time...

1. Since it's Jesus would I have to capitalize Zombie when in reference to him?

I believe so.

B. What does your title of "Chief Operating Officer" actually mean?

I'm the guy making sure the chiefs operate properly. Heh "B."

3. Are we going to see another bad-ass 2-page-spread anytime soon like the one of the Governor and his head-tanks?

I'm sure eventually we will.

4. I didn't realize Adlard was from England. Are we going to see any foreign people? It would be awesome to have a crazy Scottish dude with a bastard sword. Maybe he and Michonne could get into a sword fight.

Then I'd be compelled to write a horrible accent. So no.

E. Where are the "Ted Nugents" and "Charlton Hestons" of the zombie apocalypse?

Living on farms and having a good time? Heh "E."

6. To Charlie and Cliff: What has been your favorite part of The Walking Dead where you just had to look at your art and say, "Wow! That is my art. How bad-ass am I?" To which Kirkman and I would respond, "Extremely Bad-Ass!"

I don't have time to write them and get a response... I mean, I gotta have this turned in in a few minutes. But Charlie would probably say "Each and every page, old chap!"

7. When your kid (a girl right?) does career-day at school and she brings you in are you going to freak all the kids out with pictures of zombies eating people? You could tell them that if they study real hard in school they could be a biochemist and one day make zombies a reality. That would be awesome. You might even make it on the local news or CNN. Imagine the sales spike!

Thanks again,
Dan

My oldest is a son, by the time this sees print I should have a daughter as well... but y'know, The Walking Dead isn't THE ONLY thing I write. I could just as easily bring in pages from Space Ace or Ultimate X-Men to show them.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Issue №58 was, as usual, a great read. It's a nice examination of the stress the characters are facing and an insight into where their humanity struggles to make sense of the post-apocalyptic world they face. Specifically, where they find their own violent selves in a violent world, but retain a sense of right and wrong when everything has gone wrong.

I'm sure you'll get plenty of letters commenting on all the story nuance from others though.

Would you be able to answer more of a "mechanical" question about your writing process? How far out do you plot the series you write? Do you have a rough idea of what the next arc looks

like? The next year? Or, have you figured this out for a few hundred issues? Just curious.

Thanks for some great tales!

Regards,
Frank Bergdoll

Well, I have a loose idea for the next 100 issues, but really it's pretty vague once it gets past 12 issues away and gets more and more vague the farther ahead plans get. I try to make sure I have a solid plan for the future at all times... otherwise I'd just be making stuff up. That said, I am able to change my mind and go in drastically different directions of the urge hits me. It's pretty fun, let me tell you.

Master Kirkman,

Well, you did it somehow. You followed up just as strong with issue №58 as you did with №57. Not only did you bring Rick and Abraham together but, you gave us a look at the darkest side of Carl. I love how the characters finally get that in this new world of the Dead you have to be a cold blooded killer in order to survive. That doesn't make you a bad person though. You can kill Mother Teresa and still be a good person as long as you believe that you had to do it!

You're making me feel so much better about myself.

Again you surprised me with Carl's revelation that he is also a black-hearted killer (and a kid too!). This new guy is going to be some real trouble but, Rick, fresh off of Carl's close encounter would be a hypocrite to abandon his old friend just because he murdered a few living people to feed to his zombie son! I just hope Abraham understands too or he will be a very short-lived member of the group.

Now as far as Dale is concerned, he is in big trouble. Abraham isn't going to take lightly to him trying to leave the group (especially if he tries to take any supplies with him) but, more importantly Dale doesn't realize how closely bonded Rick and Abraham are now. Rick isn't going to let Dale abandon him again (even though he was right to leave the prison). My money is on Dale being the next one to die and it being done by someone in the group.

Thanks for another great issue!
Allen S

Let's start taking bets...

Awesome, that's it, kids.

See you guys back here next month for issue 61!!

—Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, Letter Hacks, Amanda here! This issue is a lot to take in -- Billy, Ben, and then Carl... the kids are definitely NOT all right, and this is only the very start of our next story arc. In fact, we've got a story arc WITHIN a story arc over these six issues, since we're leading into the very dark "Fear the Hunters" event that starts in #62. And for those who have been keeping up, we've got another connecting cover set for this arc by the lovely Stephanie Hans -- who is bringing her haunting, painterly style to a very cool piece that's got a little bit of everything in there.

I'm thrilled with what Stephanie has been able to accomplish with her set of connecting covers. Just spectacular! What an issue to come back to with new mail! Sheesh!

Anyway, let's not waste any time and dive right in!

Hi Mr. Kirkman:

In TWD №50 someone asked if you ever put little "Easter Eggs" inside issues like zombie celebrities or quotes from movies? You replied, "Burt Reynold's moustache appears in every issue." That's a tough one and unable to find it. Can you please give a page№ or what the moustache looks like? I think it is on the second story roof over a window.

I learned the definition of an "Easter Egg" and "that's cannon" in TWD №37 when Jeffrey Grimes panda backpack in TWD The Alien can be found in The Walking Dead Saint's and Sinners implying Claudia was successful in making it to the states. You said, Claudia and Jeffrey's backpack were eaten by a whale as his backpack was found in the carcass of a whale. No mention of finding human bones. I read about a man who was gobbled up by a whale while taking pictures off South Africa's coast immediately held his breath until the whale promptly spit him back out.

Thank you.
Richard Moore

It's possible Claudia wasn't as lucky as that guy and only the backpack made it...

To be clear, sometimes I say things in this letter column... for fun. It's possible Burt Reynold's mustache doesn't appear in a single issue of THE WALKING DEAD ever... and I was only joking. But I will neither confirm nor deny that, or the fact that Claudia is alive and well and living it up in the Ozarks.

Dear Robert Kirkman,

I have never tried writing to an author of any kind before, but I decided to try writing to you after having to write a letter to the author of the book I chose for an English assignment. I have really enjoyed rereading The Walking Dead as the deluxe editions have been coming out. Hershel Greene was one of my favorite characters because he just seemed like a good guy to me, and even though I knew that he was going to die his death really hit me way too hard because even though his son died he still had one daughter that was still alive and a newly wed son-in-law, and despite that he still decided to let the governor kill him instead of fighting. Yet I am still looking forward to the next issues as I still want to see what happens to Rick and the rest of the gang.

I recently began reading Invincible, and I have enjoyed it so far. I have found it cool how the Outstanding Wolfman and Invincible seem to take place in the same universe. On another note which I'm sure this has been answered before so sorry in advance if it has. Do you plan on ever continuing The Walking Dead at all?

At the moment? I do not. But we're reprinting it in Deluxe form for another... six years or so? Who knows what could happen in that time.

Sincerely,

Kenny Miller

p.s how much longer until issue 69?

That second question I can answer... Issue #69 will be out August 16! Nice.

Dear Amanda, Image, The Walking Dead, and Kirkman,

I've been a reader of The Walking Dead since I was a kid. I enjoyed The Walking Dead Weekly format and have been published before and am very excited to see Fear The Hunters come to life in color along with Abraham and Rosita. Personally, it's a big achievement for me to live this long and see that the comic book series has a talented colorist and editor working on this book. I also enjoyed the finale to the TV series.

I've got questions that need answers. I'll do a number format that is reminiscent of the early days of the comic.

1. Will there ever be a sequel to the Walking Dead comic book? Will you be able to contract the rights to a comic book sequel to someone?

I suppose it sounds stingy, but I can't see myself ever allowing anyone else to write a series in this world. It was hard enough letting Brian K. Vaughan write a single issue. I HAVE talked to another writer about doing another self-contained thing, but I don't know if that will ever come together, and I definitely couldn't see myself ever allowing anyone to do a full-on sequel. I'd come back and write more stories myself before I allowed that to happen.

2. When coloring the comic, is there any debate about which colors to use for the characters clothing or for the deads blood/remains? Is it up to the colorist or the original writers/creators?

Dave McCaig and I had some discussions early on about zombie blood being a little browner and grosser than human blood, and how I don't want to ever have green zombies or anything like that. Aside from that, the covers [from the original series run] themselves are a good guide for how characters should be colored, and I trust Dave's judgment when it comes to color in general, he is one of the best!

3. Will Robert Kirkman ever return to Letter Hacks?

I'm here right now! Do people not know this is me? This is ME!! I'm back commenting on letters every 6th issue. So, the start of every new "arc", even though the arcs aren't that clearly defined. Man... do people just think

the two different colors are Amanda? Poor Amanda! I could inadvertently be putting words in your mouth! That's not great.

Thanks for zombie content and years of entertainment.

Sincerely, Xana Buurne

22-Year-Old American

I'm Amanda and I love this job so much I don't ever, ever want a raise, no siree.

G'day from Down Under!

Robert, I've loved your comics for years, from Jubilee (super fun read) to Black Panther 2099 (what an ending!) to Fire Power (so refreshing!). I did read the first 2 trades of TWD about 6 years ago and liked it, but sadly didn't keep getting more cos clearly my priorities were wrong haha.

Maybe you can only enjoy my work in small doses. 6 issues of Jubilee, great. 193 issues of THE WALKING DEAD, too much!

I came back to TWD thanks to 2 things; The Last of Us and Crossover. TLOU is my absolute favourite game franchise, mostly for it's enticing story telling and drama. I've played them so much that I needed more great zombie -- shit, sorry -- Walking Dead stories. Around this time, I'd finished reading Donny Cates' brilliant Crossover, and I loved your bit with Negan. Even though it is the 1st time reading his character I love it haha, so I wanted to dive back in.

The plan worked! I knew I wrote that scene for a reason.

So I looked up Walking Dead in the League of Comic Geeks app (an incredible resource) and I saw something called The Walking Dead Deluxe, clicked on it, read the description. then got super, SUPER excited!!! TWD BEING RERELEASED IN FREAKING COLOUR!?! FUCKING AWESOME!!! But I was 2 years behind at this point and I had to weigh up "is it worth me chasing down 40+ issues"? So I read No1 in colour from a... site... (I only do this to see if I want to buy the comic later) and quickly knew that TWDD was my way into Walking Dead. 3 months later and I've collected 38 of the 53 issues out so far! It's been a LOT of work chasing the issues down from different stores, particularly in Australia, and it's been more than worth it!

That's just awesome to hear!

I'm only reading the comics when I have them, so I've only read up to №13 so far. I've been loving what I've read and am hyped for all the things to come that I've heard about. Dave McCaig's colours are absolutely gorgeous! I'm collecting the covers he recolours and love love love being able to see both his and the original series covers, such a nice surprise when my comics started arriving! I also really appreciate you putting spoiler warnings in for people like me who are coming to the series fresh. My plan is to only read the series as the Deluxe issues come out, so I'll have finally finished TWD in about 6 years haha, which I think is so cool! I'll also be getting trades of your other series in the meantime. The Invincible Compendiums are next on my to buy list.

I also listen to music for all the comics I read as it helps me get immersed in what I'm reading. For TWD it's been a lot of country music, mostly Johnny Cash. I only knew his version of Hurt, so hearing and falling in love with his music has been great, THANKS!

If you like listening to music while you read the series, it might be interesting to know that for the 16 years I wrote the series I listened to a lot of The Dirty Three and Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds while writing it. So... y'know... you might give those a try.

Thank you so, so, SO fucking much for The Walking Dead Deluxe! I really appreciate the effort the whole team is making to give TWD new life and bring in new fans like me. You're all fucking kickass, and show why comic books is the best story telling medium!

P.S. Do you listen to music while reading/writing comics? And are there any other comic series you think would be good for the Deluxe treatment?

Cheers, Bernie Noma.
Sydney, Australia.

I almost didn't pick this letter full of praise, but you snuck a question in at the very end. Glad you're enjoying!

I used to write with music playing almost all the time. Now, I do most everything in absolutely silence and I don't really know what caused the change. It's very odd. I would use music to help me jump from THE WALKING DEAD to INVINCIBLE, which I sometimes had to write scenes for in the same day. So,

I'd go from The Dirty Three to Presidents of the United States of America or something... because while INVINCIBLE is actually a more violent comic... it was always more of a FUN comic.

Kirkman,

Up to this point I hadn't really noticed the color versus the black and white. However, this issue the background colors really popped. Even though this is a reunion type issue, which you would think would be a happier one, the background color still makes it a sad tone. Kind of cool.

Of all the characters in this series I really felt we didn't get enough of Abraham. He kind of had a Tyresse vibe to him but more than that I always kind of saw him as a "what if the Governor or Negan didn't go bad" kind of character.

Is it bad I totally forgot the twins existed until reading this issue?

Brandon Borzelli
Lebanon, NJ

Will you forget the twins after THIS issue, Brandon??

Heh.

Hello Robert, Amanda, and everyone else on The Walking Dead Deluxe Team,

Like a lot of letters I have seen as I reread through this series, this is my first time writing to comic creators, and for me there is no better comic to write to. This is my favorite series and I cannot express how awesome it is that you guys are rereleasing it in colored individual issues. I started reading this series around the New Beginning era and only collected it in trade and later in omnibus format, so getting it now in individual issues biweekly is so cool, I finally get to own all these covers that I didn't get the opportunity to own before! I have every variant of every Deluxe issue so far and I plan to continue getting all of them the rest of the way (please don't release 100 variants for issue 100, I'll go bankrupt).

Why would you even put that idea out into the world, Trey?

*A hundred variants for issue #100 you say?
HMMMMMMMM.*

Robert, you have gotten me addicted to long-form storytelling, so much so that it's hard for me to get interested in shorter stories, because the characters do not evolve like they do in stories like *The Walking Dead*. Rick Grimes has to be my favorite character in fiction, as he transforms so much in the span of the story, and I relate to him to some degree. I am from Hebron, Kentucky and am actually currently living in the city of Lexington and going to the University of Kentucky to get my undergrad degree in architecture, and it's cool that Rick comes from a similar location that I do (and you do as well, Robert). Also, kind of a weird thing I've been doing as TWDD has been coming out is that I have been growing my hair on pace with Rick, just for fun. I have a similar hair type to Rick so I thought it would be an entertaining thing to do, and as you can imagine, my hair is starting to get quite long.

If you're in Lexington, make sure you hit GUMBO YA-YA, that place is the best!

I'm still waiting for you guys to release the TWD specials (ie Michonne, Tyreese, Morgan, Gov) in deluxe format, I think it would be cool if you did them every few months in 2023 for TWDs 20th anniversary, but no rush if you already have plans for them (you should probably do them somewhat soon though because the TWDD story is starting to progress beyond them). Anyway, thanks again for all the work you've done for us readers. If you put this in the Letter Hacks it would make my year!

P.S. I love the new Finch covers, every single one is excellent :D

Sincerely,
Trey Barnes

Consider your year made!

Thanks for writing in, Trey!

Hello Mr Kirkman

This is my first time writing to Letter Hacks. Ive only really got into *The Walking Dead* show back when Covid started. I wanted something new to watch and randomly clicked on the show. Best decision Ive ever made in my life so far. I never read

the comics back then but year ago, I found a good deal on all the Compendiums and started reading through the first 30 ish issues. I started disliking the B&W format. Felt it too boring so gave up reading it. Had over 4000 pages of pure excellence on my shelf for a year. Every day I saw the cover of the second book and saw Rick. How different he looked from the first book. Next day I read all 4 books within 2 weeks every night before I went to bed. Rick as a character kept me going every day. The TV version and Comic version. I see my self in the mirror and think the person I aspire to be is Rick Grimes. Hell I'm starting to dress as him on accident. That character development of him made his story never get boring and who doesn't like a guy who will bite someones throat out to protect his family. I do have a few questions for you Mr Kirkman.

Some light spoilers ahead for all you new readers -- proceed with caution.

1. Do you think Rick ever had that no mad hardened version in himself hidden away even before the apocalypse ready to be triggered?

I don't. The potential was obviously there, but I don't think it existed until it needed to.

2. Why did you decide to have a shaved old man Rick?

Different visual looks are important to a character. Think of all the various Luke Skywalkers you can picture off the top of your head. It's important to have each era have a visual representation.

3. What made you choose to make Carl and Sophia a couple back in issue 193 and getting rid of Lydia?

Just to show that things had changed and occurred in the time jump... and it was always the plan, that these two who had been together almost the entire apocalypse ended up together.

4. What is your favorite pannel from the series.

Hard to pinpoint. There are so many great options. The one that affects me the most is definitely Lori's dead eyes staring me down while that dead baby arm peeks out from under her. Still haunts me to this day... friggin' Charlie Adlard and his unparalleled greatness.

Thanking for you making such a character that has got me through so many tough times.

Sincerely
Nick
Edmonton, Alberta

Glad to know the characters did the same thing for you they did for me!

Hey, Robert! Experiencing TWD comics for the first time ever and my God, what a ride it has been. I wonder if the deluxe issues will ever get a physical collected edition as I live in Pakistan and in a country like this, we hardly get comics and ones we do are delayed and collected editions so I would love to know your thoughts on it as I want to collect these amazing issues in my hand.

Sherjan Aamir.
Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

A letter from Pakistan is definitely a first for me, super cool!

There are no plans at this time to collect this series. There are still quite a few ways to collect this series in its original black and white form, after all.

Hello Letter Hacks,

Dave McCaig is one of my favorite colorists in all of comics, so I was thrilled when it was announced that he was the one who'd be coloring all of WD. (And a moderate guarantee that he'd be around for awhile, that he'd colored 90 issues before one was published? Wow, I appreciate Kirkman and company planning ahead like that.) I hadn't really read the series, and the one-issue-at-a-time release, a la Classic X-Men, and the biweekly schedule appealed to me. I love being able to compare McCaig's Cover B colors to the Rathburn originals on the back covers. And with interiors, McCaig does so much with a limited palette, like how one face or arm or hand will just be a tone, a highlight color, and a shade color, or one additional highlight color, three or five hues in total, and many, many objects and areas are just a single base color, like that one green-grey for the background sky at night.

Some more ornate or "hot" comics are a visual treat with all of Photoshop's 16 million colors in the right hands (*sigh*, a lot of not-right hands out there, too), with complex light sources and reflected light and gradients and textures, but reading those can be a little tiring. You have to be really good to make less-is-more work, which McCaig does in every single panel. He knows not just how to use Photoshop, but how light

behaves. Yet he can also go heavier and more "modern" (to use an imprecise term), like that one Alan Davis Fantastic Four cover, or those seven Ivan Reis Green Lantern covers. Comics are a visual language, and McCaig is a great fit for Adlard's flatter shapes and spotted blacks.

All that said, I wanted to point out the coloring error in issue №56, page 19, panel 3.

-Tim

Well, dang, Tim. Went to take a look and there it is. We'll have to update that, thanks for pointing out!

Perfect structure to this email. Tons of compliments leading to the knife at the end. No notes.

Hi there, Mr. Kirkman!

Did you know you're big (no pun intended) here in the Philippines? Makes me wonder when are you going to visit our 7,107 beautiful islands though!

But anyways, first off, this is my first time to write to you and would like to thank you for creating such a wonderful story with so much blood and gore.

I was around 6 or 7 yrs. old when I first found out about The Walking Dead comic books. Heck, it took me about probably ten years to have my first copy of it, issue №100 being my first one (RIP Glenn) and from then on, I never missed a single issue. I am 24 now and I just finished reading №55 as of this writing and I'm hoping to see this printed sometime in the future? Hehe.....please?

Done!

Just a quick question: Being the great storyteller that you are, do you still have any plans on creating another story that has the same depth and gore as The Walking Dead?

Again, thank you for everything The Walking Dead. Kirkman Lives!

-Odracir, from the Philippines

I don't know that I'll ever do another series that lasts 100 issues or more. I think I'm the only creator in comics to have written TWO 100+ issue runs of an original creator-owned comic, and that makes me want to do THREE, but

realistically, I don't know when I'll find the time to squeeze in another decade worth of work with everything else I have going on. Maybe someday.

As for gore, yes... my recent work is QUITE tame in that respect. I find myself longing for the days of ultra-violence. I have a project on the horizon that will scratch that itch. Stay tuned.

That's all the new mail we've got for this arc but see you back here in another six-issues! Trying to answer as many questions as we can this year, so keep 'em coming!

-Amanda LaFranco

This was a LOT OF MAIL! Whew! Let's get to the old stuff!

-Robert Kirkman

Let me just take a moment to mention that I just noticed the other day that Y: The Last Man ended at issue 60. Here we are at #61. Yikes. Maybe if we go 200 issues our series will be as good as Y: The Last Man.

I had a discussion with Erik Larsen a while back about how we both compared our long-running series to other series we read as fans that hit similar numbers. When he hit Savage Dragon №50, he would think about where Fantastic Four was at issue 50. In the same way, I compare INVINCIBLE to Savage Dragon. Was INVINCIBLE #25 even remotely as cool as Savage Dragon №25? Things like that, and it's only really done when my comp copies come in the mail... never when I'm actually doing the writing (that'd be cheating).

Now, I've never really done that with THE WALKING DEAD. To be perfectly honest, I'm mostly unaware of what issue numbers are unless I'm getting covers done or writing a letters column. So yeah, I'm usually not thinking of what an issue number is when I'm plotting or writing, and I don't actively compare this book to Y: The Last Man or any other series as far as plot progression or amount of lesbian sex scenes.

But I have a tremendous amount of respect for writer Brian K. Vaughan, and series artist and co-creator, Pia Guerra. What they and their co-conspirators achieved on that series over its run is an inspiration to me and every other creator doing new, original comics these days. It's great, great stuff.

It almost doesn't feel right to pass them in issue numbers...

Anyway, sorry to ramble on there. I hope you guys like the issue, it's leading to some big cool stuff ahead for our crew of survivors. I'm more excited about this book now than I've ever been. I can't wait to show you all what we have planned.

Until then, how about I give a few snarky replies to some fan mail?

Dear Kirkman,

Firstly, I thank you. THE WALKING DEAD is my addiction.

Every Wednesday I feel like Billy Madison and his "Nudie Magazine Day" hoping that the new issue of TWD is out. You make me love my boyfriend more because he got me hooked on your comic (along with others like Preacher and Watchmen. Great stuff.) I've even got my best friend hooked, and she never would have picked up a comic on her own.

You should try Y: The Last Man... it's good.

I've always loved zombies, but it always bothered me how dumb some of the characters were. Not yours though, they're as realistic as it gets. I just thought I would let you know how much I love TWD. Thank you again, and keep 'em coming, man.

Carissa =)

Awesome, thanks for writing, Carissa. It's always good to hear from our female readers.

Dear Robert,

I've been reading your Image stuff since near the beginning so I figure it's time to give you some well-deserved kudos. This is only the second letter I've ever written to a comic (yeah, that's right NOT the first! Take that Kirkman!!). The first was to the fine folks that do Proof every single month.

Issue №59 was excellent and left me with the feeling that big stuff is just around the corner. Morgan is freaking crazy and I love it. After reading the special a while back, I hoped Morgan and his son would be okay so they could become a part of the group. Was

making Duane a zombie a tough decision for you?

Not at all, it was always planned from the very beginning that if we ever saw them again, Duane would be a zombie. Actually, I guess it's fine to go ahead and mention that Morgan was originally going to meet back up with the group much sooner, and when I realized I wouldn't be able to logically get him back in the book sooner, I created Tyreese to do some of the things Morgan was going to do. The big fight between Tyreese and Rick from issue 22 & 23 was originally planned to be Morgan and Rick... but those were plans made before the first issue even shipped... so a lot of that stuff has changed along the way.

I'm looking forward to seeing you and Cory together again on Destroyer and thanks for "on time in 09!" I'd buy your stuff regardless, but it IS appreciated. One tiny criticism though.... Please get an editor or proofreader for your responses in Letter Hacks.... mad typos in №59. Please don't let it be that dude with a chick's name because everything he touches gets cancelled, dammit (The Irredeemable Ant-Man and BRIT) If printing this means bumping out an Andrew J. Shaw letter, I'm all for it!

Image Rules All,
Lee

Typos, bah... you know what I mean most of the time, right? I suppose it could be seen as being a tad unprofessional, but I've noticed typos in nearly every letters column I've ever read. It happens.

Dearest Kirkman,

I have been reading THE WALKING DEAD since it started and have always enjoyed it. However, as of late, two things have really started to bother me:

1. Why is everyone following Eugene so blindly?! So what if he says his work is classified? Wouldn't Rick want to know if this guy is telling the truth if he's going to put Carl's life in danger by going on a trek to Washington D.C.? Also, Washington was a heavily populated area - wouldn't there be thousands and thousands of zombies there? Why is no one thinking ahead? Eugene could be completely full of shit and no one is really questioning him. It all seems a little too convenient to me.

Maybe so... but to be fair, and I believe the characters have discussed this, going to Washington in and of itself seems like a good idea. That's where the government would be, things might even be stable there, who knows. They've already established picking an arbitrary place to stay is dangerous—more dangerous than being on the road... so even if Eugene is full of it—what's the harm? Also, Abraham did a good deal of convincing on Eugene's behalf... and then you could add to all this the fact that our group was pretty shell-shocked when these guys came along with some kind of mission to help take their minds off what had just happened to them.

2. What is up with Dale? It seems like all he does now a-days is bitch and give advice. "Wah Wah, I hate sleeping in a tent" or "Now, Rick I'm going to tell you what you should do." Is this what you think seniors sound like? If this all we can expect from him maybe it's time to send Dale off to the old RV park in the sky.

Dale's been through a lot. I don't think all seniors are like this, but I think he's got more than enough reasons to be crabby. Also, Rick is always messing things up for him lately... he's got a lot to complain about.

Otherwise THE WALKING DEAD is still excellent. Keep up the good work.

Matt Ferguson

P.S. How does Charlie keep turning in such quality work month after month? Do you blackmail him? Do you know specifics about what it takes for him to "relax" at night?

Charlie is a professional, dedicated human being. More so than myself, I believe. He's a damn machine and this book just wouldn't be the same without him. And yes, I bribe him with drugs.

Hey look... another issue, in the can. WOO!

See you all back here in four weeks. Plenty of time for you to read through the entirety of Y: The Last Man.

—Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, readers, Amanda here! I'm not sure about you but having a five-part story set within a six-issue arc gives me agita. It's my editor brain, I just can't help it. So yes, even though we just started a new story arc last issue, this issue kicks off part one of five of the "Fear the Hunters" storyline. Luckily, it comes to a close with #66 and doesn't extend beyond that... I think that would actually kill me. While we anxiously wait to find out what happened to Dale, here's some classic Letter Hacks for you, where we were finally able to make Mark R. Amius's wish of seeing TWD in color come true, I hope you're reading Mark!

And here we are... the big start to our HUNTERS storyline. Cool stuff planned going ahead here. I hope you cats enjoy the ride.

Now, no time to waste, let's ride right on into the mail, shall we?

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

As a comic book retailer I am disappointed in the lack of suck provided by THE WALKING DEAD. During the recession, while my customers have limited disposable income, they need multiple story arcs, tie-in miniseries, and variant covers. Having been in the business for nearly a decade, I'd like to offer some suggestions:

1. Stop wasting opportunities to expand THE WALKING DEAD universe. By issue №60 you should have THE WALKING DEAD, THE WALKING DEAD: ADVENTURES IN WOODBURY, THE WALKING DEAD: ALL HAIL MEGATRON, and no less than three miniseries focusing on individuals.

Wait... I see what you're doing here...

2. You've done a great job of relentlessly killing off characters, but why haven't you brought any of them back? You could solve this problem conventionally by having the survivors find a brilliant scientist with an epic

underground laboratory. Said scientist could create clones (always a fan favorite) of the previously dead characters and regrow Rick's hand.

3. Adopt an Avatar Press Inc policy on covers, but don't stop with regular, painted, and wraparound, kindly include 1:10, 1:25, and 1:50 variants for me to put directly on eBay!

4. Having a monthly comic come out monthly is a disaster. Readers haven't had time to forget the previous issue. By continually being punctual on top of not offering a bewildering number of related titles, you aren't effectively capitalizing on the trade paperback market.

5. Zombie Obama.

I really love your comic and want to see it succeed. Please take my suggestions under advisement.

Sincerely,
Eddie Price

Time Tunnel Comics and Toys, Hickory, NC.
Plan 9 Comics and Games, Boone, NC.

Thanks for the suggestions. I'll take them to heart—but really, we're just trying to keep it real, like Y: The Last Man, they never did a spin-off or anything. What a great book that was.

In all honestly, there have been a few times when I've considered a spin-off. There is an original graphic novel I actually started writing that would be THE WALKING DEAD Volume 0. It would take place before volume one and be about Lori, Shane, and Carl getting to Atlanta. There are some interesting moments in that time that I thought might be good to show. In the end, I shelved it, but I might do that someday.

Hello Robert,

Thanks for all of your hard work and creative talent. I've really been enjoying your work over the past few years. I have a few questions & comments for you:

1) Have you seen Dead Set?

It's a U.K. mini that aired on BBC4. It's about a group of people living in the Big Brother house when a zombie outbreak basically levels the country. It's amazing. Really I should say no more other than "fire extinguisher." Trust me. Seek this out if you haven't seen it yet.

I haven't seen it, but I've had a few people try to help me out on that front. I think I was even mailed a DVD... I just haven't had the time yet. Too many episodes of America's Next Top Model to watch with the wife. I hear good things. I'll see it eventually.

2) More of a statement really for this one. I like THE WALKING DEAD, but it has seemed a bit aimless lately... sorry to say. However, when I realized this, I thought, "Well that actually works very well for the series. It is 'THE WALKING DEAD' after all, so it's slightly poetic that it should wander story-wise." Regardless, I'd feel better if I knew you had some end in sight. I'm sure this is gonna put little Kirkmans through college and whatnot, but have you thought much about ending it? If not, do you have any idea of what you're heading towards or is it a day-by-day process? (I know you've answered this to some degree before, but I guess I'm wondering if it's changed over time.) Truth be told, I think you're a great writer, but I'd like to see some new stuff from you. Even a mini-series or some two-shots could be cool.

Well, I'm currently doing INVINCIBLE, THE ASTOUNDING WOLF-MAN, HAUNT and Image United as well as THE WALKING DEAD. HAUNT should start coming out soon, that's a regular series, I'm having a lot of fun with it. Image United is a big mini-series that should be out soon and will feature art from all the Image founders, minus Jim Lee. Aside from that, I have a lot of other comics I'm planning to roll out over the next few years. Doing THE WALKING DEAD isn't keeping me from doing other books.

As far as a planned ending, no, but I know what's going on in this book two or three years ahead of where we are now... and I have rough ideas past that. It may not seem like this book is heading in a clear direction, but it is.

I have no plans to end it any time soon.

3) Zombie cats? Would love that if you could pull it off.

No zombie animals, that's a rule.

4) Nice work on Invincible! I'm really diggin' that series as well.

Thanks.

5) Are you particularly attached to the slow zombies? I've been kinda diggin' the fast zombies lately.

Fast zombies make no sense. I don't hate them or anything... I just think slow zombies are more realistic.

6) Have there been any ideas to start expanding on the zombie-types themselves? I know we just saw a herd in №59, and it'd be cool if we started finding out some crazy shit about the zombies. Zombies gotta evolve too right? That brings me back to №3. Cat-zombies. Boom!

The zombies aren't evolving but as we learn more about them it might appear that way.

7) Had you ever thought about doing a single issue (№100 maybe?) in color? Or maybe all black-and-white but with only red blood? Not trying to write your book for you or anything. You do a damn good job. Just curious. I actually thought you might do something like that for №50. I was wrong...

No. No color... ever.

8) Do you think this whole legalizing pot thing is gonna go through here in Cali? If so, we could have plenty of zombies roaming this state before the year is up.

I don't think that's a realistic concern. The whole state won't suddenly start toking up just because it's legal. It would probably just bring the state some much needed tax revenue... shave off a large section of the illegal drug trade, thus making the place a little safer, and maybe even help to clean out some of the prisons a bit. I think it's been proven that alcohol is much more dangerous... so frankly, this is long overdue. I hope it passes, and I hope it becomes countrywide eventually. And just for the record, I've never touched the stuff in my life... this stuff just make sense.

Anyways, that's it. Thanks again for all your hard work, buddy.

Tim Sacramento, Ca

Read Y: The Last Man!

RK and Co.,

I LOVE the two page spread of the herd (is that an El Camino?), just one of many examples of why this is one of my all time favorite books...

They got that El Camino in issue 51, didn't they? C'mon, man!

What I am really impressed with, however, is your treatment of the concept of mental illness as a coping mechanism among the various characters recently (Rick, Michonne, and now Morgan). I have seen and read a fair share of zombie stories throughout the years, but I can't remember one of them having touched on this particular idea quite like you have...It makes perfect sense really, if you think about it. Becoming insane to deal with an insane world could work...Who knows?

Either way, I love what you have done here. Keep doing that thing y'all do. Oh, and by the way, congrats on 5 years...Here is to 20 more!

Cam Stylez

Or hell, 50 more! But yeah, I think by now just about everyone still alive in the world would be at least a little bit crazy. More on that as the series progresses.

Dear Robert,

I just finished №60, congratulations on such a fantastic series! You have remained steadfast and loyal to the craft, the story remains strong and continues to disturb yet somehow inspire. I have to admit, following Rick on that analog phone was one of the most heartbreaking periods of your series, so far. I'm so glad to see him aligning with Abraham and pulling away from the mental anguish. PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE don't kill off Michonne. She's my favorite character in your series.

I don't know... Michonne's been around for good long while. You're not getting sick of her yet?

I've thought a lot about how I'd survive the zombie post-Apocalypse. I would definitely take to the trees; it would be ideal if myself and my camp had hammock tents...zombies don't seem to associate humans with the tree's in the forest. That's where I'd be. :)
BTW —you have a lot of ladies following your book. We really dig the female characters.

Yay! Seriously, though—that's always good to hear.

Thanks so much for the consistency, the issue's are just getting better and better.

Sincerely,
Theresa Kiefer-Taylor (35-year-old comic geek)

Thanks for writing, Theresa, we'll be sure to keep putting these things out. Oh, and I was kidding about Michonne up there, Charlie would kill me if I got rid of her. Of course... Charlie really liked Tyreese...

I'm sure you get this all the time and I'm sure you HATE when people say this. But I wish for nothing more than The Walking Dead to be in color.

Sorry, I had to say it. I feel better now that it's off my chest.

Mark R. Amius

Okay Mark... for you... I'll print this issue in color. I hope we were able to notify the printer in time.

Mr. Kirkman,

I write this having just read issue №60, congratulations on reaching it! Despite the comic being of age where it can finally collect social security I hope it continues well on into a supernaturally long life. I very much enjoy your story, the zombie movie that never ends.

The teaser for the upcoming issues was great. Wounded Dale makes me think they might not be too friendly. Perhaps we will get to see Andrea's sniper skills again?

Perhaps.

This issue was sure fun, the pace picked up. Good to see the whole gang reconnect again after a few issues being apart. Also nice to see everyone was still around, too! I thought perhaps Michonne might have wondered off looking for Rick. Abraham was sure kind to carry Carl during when they fled from the horde, Rick might owe him a thank you for that one. I bet the gang is looking forward to winter again at this point, especially with a herd being seen for the first time.

Speaking of Abraham, you mentioned you originally had a different direction for him, can you talk a bit about that?

Have you considered doing a double-size issue? Perhaps for another milestone, like issue №75?

Your buddy through brains and bile,
Brent Zustiak

If we did ANYTHING for an anniversary issue, it'd be for issue 100. Issue 50 had a few extra pages in it—but I don't think anyone noticed. Anniversary issues are a lot of work. It's much easier to just do a normal-sized issue and keep on trucking.

As for Abraham... well, I originally imagined things taking a much darker turn. Abraham wasn't originally going to be in the book for very long, but after I started writing him, I really, really enjoyed writing him, so I decided to keep him around (at least for a little bit). I don't want to really go into specifics, because I could always use what I was going to do with him, later... with another character.

It pays to recycle!

Dear Zombie Lord,

I am really glad I caught up to you in 2009. I love this on time shit! It is hard enough to wait a month for my Walking Dead fix but, if it was irregular I would go crazy. Congratulations on 60 issues! And on the story/characters getting stronger and more interesting all the time. I really love the pace of the story right now. There is no time to stop and rest. I feel sorry for the party though. Not only are they on the run from the herd but, now it looks like at least one of the little boys is turning into a sociopath (poor kitty). Absolute Genius! As far as Dale is concerned he can rot in hell. I don't care if he is justified or not he is against our hero and has to go. If you don't take him out soon I will!

It's funny how quickly the fan base seems to have turned on poor old Dale.

I just wanted to comment on a couple of things I loved about issue №60. I really like how Abraham and Carl are bonded since the attempted rape. The way Abe is carrying Carl like a sack of potatoes is very endearing. Abe is like a big old zombie killing, people slaughtering, teddy bear. Watch out for the wrath of Abe if his girl likes more than just

Morgan's hair. And for the show stopper of the issue: The murdered family in the house they hid out in was classic Stephen King-level horror. Amazing! The babies with holes drilled in their heads resting peacefully on the beds was very heart-rending but, the carnage from the shot gun in the next room was awesome! A sweet Kurt Cobain moment if I ever saw one.

Very dark.

I will lay \$20 on Abraham killing Dale. Can we get some odds on this? How about 1 to 1 Abe, 2 to 1 Rick, 3 to 1 Michonne, 3 to 1 Morgan, 5 to 1 Carl, and the long shot 10 to 1 the little cat killer.

That is it for now. Get back to work.

Allen S.

I think you may have a gambling problem. Seek help.

Mr. Kirkman

Just two quick suggestions:

1) After all those months since Rick lost his right hand, why does he keeps wearing that ragged and dirty bandage? It's time to remove it!

Y'know... the plan has always been to remove them after a while... we'll get around to it eventually. He has been shown changing the bandages... so I imagine they're not the same old nasty bandages from when his hand was first cut off.

2) Are the last "clicks" on issue №48 are the death sentence for all the survivors from Woodbury? What if some of them managed to barricade themselves inside the prison and survived just as the four original inmates? It would be very interesting to see a new rendezvous between both sides...who knows?

By the way, keep up with the excellent work!

Cheers,
João Paulo S. Vilas Boas

Yes, those clicks were meant to show that the Woodbury folk ran out of ammo. Whether or not they locked themselves away in the prison remains to be seen... and frankly, doesn't really need to be seen, in my opinion. They'd eventually

starve to death in there... and they were having such a good time over in that town they lived in. Such a shame.

Hello, Mr. Kirkman and company!

My name is Vadim and I'm from Russia, sorry for bad English.

In Mother Russia, comic book reads YOU!

Comics are not popular here, so The Walking Dead is my first comic book (hopefully not the last). What can I say —I'm impressed! I couldn't even imagine that comic books could be so...so real, so full of emotions and it takes my breath away. I always thought that comics are for little kids, that it's about Superman or Spiderman. I was wrong — and it is because of you! Thank you very much, you've opened new horizons for me.

One thing I wanted to ask: Do we know what happened in the rest part of world, besides the USA? I live in the far north, beyond the Polar Circle —we have very cold and long winters, so zombies wouldn't be fast. Also we are usually well-clothed, even in summer we don't wear just t-shirts on our naked bodies —we're always in jackets. And in winter we're fully covered by warm clothes —so we're harder to bite. And of course we have stronger houses (I saw how in American movies people break through walls by hammer or just heads—that won't work here), almost all have metal doors and small windows, so I think we have good chances.

Please! Don't let us die! :)

Keep working, I hope someday I'll see your books in russian shops.

That's all, thank you for your work again.

Vadim Anatolyevich Andreyev
Murmansk, Russia.

Well, I think our houses are just a bit stronger than they appear to be in movies. Maybe not in all cases—it's pretty easy to drive a car through a house... but a head would have a pretty hard time.

I haven't shown the rest of the world on purpose. Is this zombie invasion contained on the American continents? Or is it all over the world? That remains to be seen. You'll just have to keep reading.

Also, sounds like you should take a vacation, my friend—hit a beach!

Kirkmaniac,

I'm not sure if this goes to you or Charlie, but THANK YOU for having Abraham break into the house by kicking the door at the latch! This is, of course, the proper way to break down a door. Maybe I'm nitpicking, but it is so annoying to see otherwise smart TV shows and movies depicting characters crashing through doors by running their shoulder into the middle of the door. It's nice to know that the team behind The Walking Dead knows about breaking and entering...

Oooh, and were the twins playing with a zombie cat? Are there zombie cats now? Yay, zombie cats!

Dexter Midnight

Not a zombie cat—just a dead cat. And yeah, Charlie has a history with B & E... also, thinking about it, some piece of rare art seems to go missing in a museum in every town he does a signing at... weird.

And with that... I say... see you next month! I'm out!

—Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Between the stalking, and the abductions, and now the cannibalism, these Hunters are definitely trying to prove something. Coming on a little heavy, aren't they? Amanda here, and this is our first TASTE of the people in the shadows that have been preying on our group. See, I can do bad puns just like Robert below. Let's get into these old letters!

Oh, poor Dale. Well, we're really getting into the MEAT, heh... of our "Fear the Hunters" arc. I hope you guys are digging it so far.

Now, let's read some mail!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I love your work! I've been reading comics since I was 12, (which makes 13 years of comic reading for me), along with my younger sister, and we both love The Walking Dead, Tech Jacket, Invincible, etc. (I wish Tech Jacket had last longer!) Congratulations on doing so well in the business –I'm so glad you came along!

One thing I'm wondering is why you use so much written explanation sometimes in TWD? Like in issue №58, when Abraham is relaying his past to Rick, and it's the two of them sitting there, talking it out; I felt it was a little dragged out. I know he was talking about something horrifying, but I thought it might be even more horrifying and engaging if there were a few panels of gruesome flashback images, with the caption overhead of Abraham's narration. Just a suggestion. Don't bust my balls over it though.

No ball-busting. I just made the decision early-on to not do flashbacks that way. I wanted the past to have some distance with the reader... I don't really want to cut back and show these things because the important part for me, is seeing the character think about this stuff while they're talking.

You can argue it's an awful choice... and you may be right... but that's what I wanted to do.

Oh, and if you print this: To Dan who wrote

in issue № 60 that he can't get a girl cause he's a comic book nerd who reads about baby killing –what the hell? He's obviously hanging out in the bars too much, and not spending enough time in the comic book store. To all the comic book boys, in fact: The comic book girls are out there, waiting for guys just like you. Oh, we are OUT there, so stop complaining and come find us.

Many thanks,
Maria

Do you want Dan's email address? Let me know. I could hook that up, Maria. Thanks for writing.

Kirkman,

Hey, thanks for issue №61! Wow ... Carl is going to grow up to be Anton Chigurh (that bad ass in No Country for Old Men)! Seriously, I was totally blown away by the thing with the twins. That could've been the whole issue right there ... but then we get this next step in Carl's ascension to the throne once held by only the baddest of the badasses, Chuck Norris. I would actually put Carl up against Eastwood AND Norris!

Carl would lose...

Speaking of actors, Alex's letter about Abraham being Danny Trejo got me thinking it would be fun to have people write in their ideas for casting The Walking Dead HBO series! A casting call like Wizard use to do! However, you should only print letters with good suggestions! I don't think anyone wants to read five people suggesting Bruce Campbell for Rick. But I AM going to suggest someone for Rick! This guy has the chops, man! Ryan Reynolds!!!! The guy can grow a great beard and totally (to me) even looks like Rick, maybe a year or two too young, but so what? You think he does just fluff like Waiting? How about The Nines! Eh!? I could see Danny Trejo being the Governor ... and I want Hal Holbrook for Hershell!

I love that your first example of why Ryan Reynolds should play Rick is "he can grow a beard." Heh... that narrows the playing field.

Also, concerning №61's letter column: Eddie Price had a fabulous letter, but I think he was preaching to the crowd ... anyway, could you get him in front of Marvel or DC's marketing people? Oh, also, issues coming out on time is really rad man! You ALL are doing a great job, I really love this book! Thanks, guys!

David Johnson

I'll see what I can do.

Hey Robert,

I've been an avid reader of The Walking Dead for some time now – I love zombie stories. The initial spread of the virus, the shutdown of society, the lengths that people go to in order to survive ... I find it intriguing. Thank you for entertaining me, and giving my fiancée nightmares.

I only browse the Letter Hacks section every once in a while, but I noticed something in issue №59 that caught my attention: About half of the letters printed seem to be sent in by people who download your comic off the internet. There's almost no way anyone can catch up with a whole series within a week by buying all the issues. First off it's quite costly, and second of all, finding an entire collection for sale is a rarity. I'm sure you realize that a lot of people do not purchase your comic, and prefer to grab it for free online. I'm wondering, how does that make you feel? You put in so much work for this book, only to see it spread across the world without having anything to show for it. Of course, readers are readers, paying ones or not. Something can be said for reaching a broader audience, but I'm sure it still stings a little to basically have your livelihood stolen.

First off, this series is reprinted in countless collected editions. So while it may be expensive... I like to think at least a lot of these people are buying collections. We just released The Walking Dead: Compendium that collected 1-48 for a measly \$60.

I can't wait to find out what awaits Rick and the gang in DC (if they get there). All the best, and keep up the good work.

Regards,
Martijn van Weeghel
Netherlands

Thanks for writing!

Goddamn you, Kirkman! *shakes fist at sky

in anger*

It's been months since you released those "The Dead do not Stalk" images and it has been bothering the shit outta me this whole time. I hate cliffhangers and hype of any sort because then that's all I'm thinking about while waiting for said item (be it comic, TV show, etc) to come out and it kills me. Judging from the end of issue №61 it looks like you're FINALLY gonna let us know who's stalking our survivors. THANK YOU! I can't wait.

Hey, I was promoting a storyline in March that started in June! That's not that bad. It's not like that Road to Washington teaser we sent out last year at Comic-Con. Heh... they'll be in Washington soon... I promise.

But in all seriousness, The Walking Dead has become one of my top three or so comics each month. Keep up the good work, and don't change a damn thing.

By the way, what's the deal with Haunt? When will that drop? I heard you're writing it, and I love me some Todd McFarlane.

Andrew Bilgrav

HAUNT issue 1 ships in OCTOBER. This time for real. The first issue is done already as I type this. I'm very excited for people to finally see this book, it rocks!

Hi there, Mr. Kirkman,

Though I've been cutting down on my comics (and generally becoming disenchanted with superhero comics), I continue to look forward to reading The Walking Dead. I just finished issue №61 and absolutely loved what you did with all the kids in that issue, between what happened with the twins and Carl's reaction... brilliant. I can see you've got stuff coming to a boil with Carl, which was creepily foreshadowed by Rick's "phone call" this issue.

Thanks.

I didn't like, however, that not a single person in the group was happy to come across Gabriel, either as a friendly fellow survivor or as a priest. I understand that the group was going through a lot at the moment, and to add another person to the mix is frustrating for them, but to have every single person in the group look at this friendly priest with annoyance – or disdain – just didn't ring true for me.

Well... they've had some bad experiences meeting

new people in the past. Even when Abraham and crew there was tension. They'll warm to him... maybe.

But anyhow, the main reason I'm writing concerns something you brought up in the letter column. You mentioned the possibility of a future "Volume 0." I love the idea, and would like to suggest (for overall continuity's sake, of course) that if you do end up writing this, that it please (pretty please?) be drawn by Tony Moore. I'd love to read this story regardless, but for people that show up late in the game and start with Volume 0, it would make for a great segue into Volume 1.

Well, I'm not sure I'll ever do Volume 0... but Tony would definitely be considered. I don't know if he has any desire to return to these characters. He's doing just fine out on his own. His brief Ghost Rider run was excellent.

Thanks for all the great reading (I'm also currently loving Destroyer!),
Dan Nadeau
Peabody, MA

Thanks.

Rob,

I was watching Mad Max 2 and noticed the similarities between the hostage scene outside the gasoline station and the Governor returning with Tyrese. Have you seen the movie? Did you take any ideas from this?

Adam King

Not on purpose but I'm sure THE ROAD WARRIOR was an influence. I love that movie. All three Mad Max flicks (I don't count the last half of Thunderdome) are excellent.

And gasoline still works!!! Hah.

Hi there,

Been a long-time fan of The Walking Dead – bought pretty much every issue from my retailer since № 43. Having said that, I just HATED your latest issue, № 61. It's not just the story – the cheap shock moment, the characters totally acting out of character, everything.

Please continue.

The whole purpose of this issue seemed to be to shock the readers and make them feel uneasy.

But it happens in such a forced, abrupt way that it really bothers me. I mean, what makes a reader feel more uncomfortable than a kid being killed? Yeah, let's kill two kids! Wait, I can top that by making kids kill each other! Why? Who cares? Let's just alienate the readers. It's cheap, plain and simple. There is not even time too come up with an explanation for the first kill. There is no time to get into the psyche of the kid – nobody even tries to talk to him. No, let's kill him for good and then move on.

I'll give you that a scene of them talking to Ben would probably have been pretty good. I wish I'd done that. But hey, these two kids have been mostly silent for the duration of this series, and this has been planned for a while. This world would make young children crazy. Think of what they've lived through. I don't think there was anything out of character in the issue.

And when Ben gets killed by Carl (or so it seems) there's barely any time to see the characters' reactions to it. You took so much time developing the characters and now there are so many things happening at once and everything feels rushed and awkward. Even worse, I really can't feel for your protagonists, Rick and Carl, anymore. I know you want to come up with controversial ways to show what humans are capable of in certain situations but I really don't want to spend any time reading about main characters who're killing off kids or even just backing it up. Right now I couldn't give less of a fuck about any of those survivors in your tale and I'm not sure if I want to come back to this series anytime soon.

However, thanks for a nice read until now.
Joerg Nezmeskal

Sorry you're not liking the current direction. I feel Carl and Rick are very likeable if you take their environment into account. If you're not into it, by all means, it's your money... and maybe I have messed up. It's a fine line to cross, doing what I want, to keep myself interested so I can try to write the best stories... and also keeping readers happy, trying not to alienate them.

You win some, you lose some.

Do take into account though... this series is not ending any time soon... and these characters will continue to grow and evolve and change as time goes.

Maybe you'll change your mind again and like the characters as much as you did before. Or maybe Rick and Carl will die! You never know!

—Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome back, Letter Hacks. Amanda here. This issue is deadly serious and seeing Andrea punch Rick should be enough for us to know, that when it comes to Dale – this group means business. But we don't get a whole lot of humor in THE WALKING DEAD, so when Dale delivers a line as good as "You're eating tainted meat!" I do wish the group's reaction had been a slow build of escalating hurls. A classic gag really leaning into the dark, absurd hilarity of the moment. I know, I know, this is why Robert's the writer...

On to some classic letters below, in another three issues' time we'll be answering new mail once more. So, get your questions in!

And there you have it—issue 64.

Things are just going to get MORE exciting from here on out! Stay tuned.

Hopefully I got through this with less typos than last issue...

Now, let's answer a bit o' mail, shall we?

I'm an avid reader of The Walking Dead—Letter Hacks, and wanted to thank you for the Yakov Smirnoff reference in issue №62. Well played.

Bill B

Awesome, thanks. I don't even remember that, but thanks!

Kirkman,

If you've noticed a spike in sales lately, it's me. I'm the guy. From my own (numerous) purchases to the fact that I've turned everyone from my former contemporary literature professor to my fifteen-year-old nephew on to The Walking Dead, you should be noticing a difference in your

wallet. And you're welcome. I discovered your book about two months ago—a friend recommended it—and I've been addicted and obsessed ever since. I've even—after an eighteen-or-so year absence—rediscovered my love of the comic book store (who knew I had three great ones within half an hour's drive?!), and again, I thank you.

Having (sincerely) kissed your ass enough, I'd like to ask a few questions:

It's never enough.

1. Who had the foresight to bring along the beard- trimming kit? From Rick's perfect №4 (I assume that's the setting he's using to maintain that uniform beard length) to Abraham's stubbleless horseshoe moustache, there must be quite a bit of manscaping going on in-between attacks. Follow-up question: Why won't anyone let Morgan use the beard trimming kit? That's not nice. Crazy guys need attractive, manicured facial hair, too.

Well, there are razors of some kind lying around that are being used—they're not completely in the wilderness. And... they've gotten pretty woolly at times. I'm sure Morgan will get in on the act soon.

2. Shouldn't the group collectively be losing some weight? It's been more than a year, right? Andrea's pin-up midriff look on issue №62 even hints at a bit of a pot belly (unless she's arching her back to make her solo cover debut a bit more sexy!). What are they eating, anyway? Can there be that much wildlife? Wouldn't shooting wildlife attract zombies? Perhaps I'm overestimating how much it would take to feed a small group.

Weight loss, unless extremely drastic, is a hard thing to show in a comic. I'm sure everyone has lost a few pounds. Up until recently they were in a well-stocked prison and since then they've been living off non-perishable groceries found along the way or taken from the prison.

3. How the hell should I be pronouncing “Michonne?”

Me-Shawn... but I sometimes say Me-Shown... despite that being incorrect. The only one that annoys me at conventions is Me-show-nay.

If your answer to any or all of the above questions is “You go straight to Hell!” that’s alright. I’m honored. Your book is damn near perfect, and you shouldn’t change a thing (screw those morons who keep asking for color issues and debating whether or not it would make a better movie or mini-series! What don’t they get?!).

Thanks!

Joe Chellino

You go straight to hell!

Hello Kirkman

I love The Walking Dead, but I live in Norway so it’s hard to get the comic. But last year when I went to Canada to visit my family I started talking with my cousin’s husband and I told him about your series and how it was so hard to get some issues over here in Norway. After dinner he went home to get something and I didnt know what he was up to, but when he got back he had about 30 issues of The Walking Dead. I almost fainted, I was so happy! Now I think I have read them about a thousand times. I still try to follow up the newer issues, I got surprised when the governor attacked the jail and almost everyone died.

Also I’m looking forward the hunting arc of the series!

Here are some questions for you...

1) Do you read and watch zombie movies and books?

I’ve yet to read a zombie novel... but I’ll get to it eventually. What’s that one with the zombie whale? I’ve been meaning to buy that. Movies, sure... looking forward to Dead Snow (or Ded Sno—isn’t it spelt weird due to being foreign?).

2) What is your favorite zombie movie? Mine is Dawn of dead (1978)

Day of the Dead. Shaun of the Dead is a close second.

3) How is your writing process? Much coffee?
Knut-Asbjørn
Norway

No coffee. I save it only for the most extreme situations. Because of my lack of ever drinking it, a couple cups can keep me up all night if I need to pull and all-nighter working. I don’t really like the taste at all, so I stay away.

Aside from that, I have a home-office that I write in almost exclusively. I try to work 9 to 5 due to having a family. I sometimes work for a few hours late at night after my wife has gone to sleep... but I try to limit that to... less than a night or two a week. Not always the case sadly. For lettering placement, graphics work, interviews, letters columns and basically anything BUT writing scripts I have an office in the town I live in that I work in to get me out of the house. I share a workspace there with Cory Walker and Nate Bellegarde. We throw comics at each other and draw penises on each other’s belongings and change desktop images to lewd drawings and pictures when people are away. It’s a pretty fun place.

That’s why I write scripts at home.

Dear Kirkmania,

Yeah, I liked it. I can only assume the stalkers are new characters, cause otherwise... I’ve been collecting The Walking Dead since before issue №25 now; can’t quite recall a time as exciting as this! Andrea, Dale, Glen, Michonne, Carl and Rick Grimes, Morgan...I’m even getting to know the names now! Oh, and there’s Gabriel, too. Hope they all get to the church on time!!!

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

PS: Thumbs-up for a keeper issue.

Hey, look at you! Good to see you’re trying harder. Thanks for writing and continuing to read... everything.

Kirkman, old buddy....

Pigs, as you know, are used for all sorts of human transplant and testing stuff because they are similar to humans in so many ways. So I have one simple, easy to understand question:

Where are the freaking Zombie pigs!?

And btw, thanks for printing issue №62 in color. I'm color-blind but you said you would do it in the last letter column and dude, I totally believe you to be a man of honor so I know you did it. LOL.

Take care
Michael L. Heffron

No problem man—it was really expensive to do that for an issue. I hope it was worth it.

Next up—zombie pigs!! Check out issue 66 for those!

Kirkman,

Hi I'm not sure if you have answered this question yet but I have been wondering about a plot element that appeared early on that is not being used anymore...

When the boys went in to get guns from the city very early on in the comic they discovered that covering themselves in gore is a way to get the zombies to not notice them. It didn't work because it rained but overall the theory was sound.

As the story goes on the characters are totally ignoring this very valuable piece of information. There were many tight binds where they could have "gored up" and walked away from a dangerous situation. Why not carry buckets with blood and guts (and lids to minimize the smell) in the cars when they travel and that way when you are cornered by a herd you can do what is necessary. Was this a plot device you wish you had not introduced and are you ignoring it? Or is it just forgotten?

Matek

Definitely not forgotten. It will be coming up again, eventually. But I think the act of covering yourself in rotted flesh would be so unsavory that it would be reserved for the most extreme situations.

Hey Robert,

One thing nags me about the events in The Walking Dead №61 & №62: In issue №61, Ben is shot to death while sleeping on a mattress in a van, then in issue №62 his adoptive parents are shown sleeping the next day in the exact same spot. Wasn't the mattress and van interior covered with blood and gore from the gunshot, particularly if Ben was shot in the head (as was somewhat implied by the fact no one was discussing the need to prevent him from reanimating)? Even if they spent part of the day in between these events doing their level best to clean the van with the rudimentary cleaning tools available in these extreme post-apocalyptic conditions, are these folks in fact sleeping on a mattress soaked in the blood, brains and possible post-mortem bowel and bladder evacuations of their slain child?

Yer gentle reader,
Jeremy

Well, I didn't get around to showing it but there were two mattresses in the back of that Van, as seen in issue 61, and they threw one of them away. And, it's not always like movies, the exit wound could have come out of his jaw or neck after the low caliber bullet bounced inside the skull—it's possible all that mess could have been confined to the mattress.

Still, I will admit that it's a scene I probably should have shown, them dealing with that aftermath... but issue 61 was pretty crammed with stuff already and so I figured I'd gloss over it a bit.

I'll do better next time, I promise.

There you have it, another issue down! Woo! See you back here next month.

—Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Oh, how quickly the hunters become the hunted. Hello, readers, Amanda here. This, all things considered, is a fun issue. Glenn isn't seriously wounded (or not seemingly so), Dale and Andrea have been reunited, Eugene is able to show off some cool science knowledge that harkens back to some previous wound treatment, and Rick has one of his best moments, "the finger gun". Bluff called and lost, Chris. You guys shouldn't have eaten those kids.

New letters are up in a few issues' time, but until then, enjoy these classic Hacks that have some real gems: the announcement of the TV series, another instance where we'll never go color (though I think DELUXE looks much better than a cheese sandwich), and a great letter about a WALKING DEAD anime which I, for one, am still very much all for.

We're fast approaching the end of this little tale... so be sure to come back here next issue to see how things wrap up.

Our Fear The Hunters storyline opens the door for a lot of what's coming up, so while this storyline is coming to an end... this series is still years, possibly decades away from completion. So I hope you're all still having a good time.

I know we are.

Speaking of good times... there was a recent announcement about The Walking Dead being picked up as a potential television show at the cable network AMC with Frank Darabont tapped to write and direct and Gale Ann Hurd attached as producer. Cool stuff, I'm very VERY excited about this.

Hopefully 2010 will be a huge year for The Walking Dead... and not just because of my plans for issue 75.

Now... let's jump into some mail.

Kirkman!

The Walking Dead is my addiction. №63 was a true shocker. You threw me a real curveball with the preacher. When he was introduced a few issues back, I predicted he was in league with the followers and was only posing as a preacher. But oh no... issue №63 reminded me that there is nothing predictable in TWD! Organized cannibals...hadn't even crossed my mind.

Really? I'm glad we threw you with the preacher bit... but I thought the cannibal thing would be seen

a mile away, this being a zombie comic and all. I mean, zombies and cannibals go hand in hand.

Oh and by the way, I am tired of reading comments in Letter Hacks suggesting you do issues in color. Pleeceeease do not ever even consider it. Black and white for this story is the only way to go. It provides the drama and the intensity of the moment, and shows off Adlard's brilliant visuals. If it was done in color, I think it would look like a cheese sandwich. Ya know? I want to take part in the story like I do now: adrenaline pumping, not like I am reading just another comic. Keep up the black and white!

Yours Truly,
Jaclyn Senne

Yeah, no color. No way. I try to politely deflect any requests for color Walking Dead comics... I don't even want to do it either.

Kirkman,

So I am sitting at home watching an anime called Planetes (also very character driven) and my mind started to wander. I started thinking; "I would absolutely love to watch an anime of The Walking Dead." You ever given that any thought? It could run forever. It would be awesome. The storyboard is already done (comic). It could even be black and white. Anyway, I would love to see it! Just a thought. What do you think?

Adam

There was actually talk of this a couple years ago but it never came together. I'm not opposed to the idea. I love anime.

Dear Kirkorama,

More of the same really. And thus: Best comic of the night! Who knew the religious guy with a secret—really had a secret! Usually that stuff just goes nowhere; just in general. Chris, the seeming leader of the Hunters, seemed very real to me.

Thank you, Andrew. I really tried hard to give that guy a voice... cool of you to notice.

What is Chew, that flip story, about? And I can hear you saying, if not yelling, why not just read it? Right? Maybe I will. If it's a hit. I remember abandoning The Walking Dead after issue №1...

yet I've been collecting since right before issue №25! So there you go. Besides, I would've called it "Chew-y."

It's an awesome new series from Image Comics that I feel like you should be reading so I gave you issue 1 for free. For anything past that, you're just going to have to read that free comic I gave you and decide for yourself. It's a great book.

I think the long explanations that TWD non-dead characters go on and on about is a way of providing narrative and recaps, no? Any reason on why the bad reverend turned his back, and his door, on those good people like that? I've been thinking about what you said in the dialog this issue; you not only have to do good and not do bad, but accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior? How does one go about that? Does it involve candles...? Oh shoot, now you got me all worried. Oh hell... er, I mean, oh well. Till next time, keep it Kirklicious!

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Fear, man... he did it out of fear. Until you've ever been in a situation like that... you don't know how you will react.

Kirkman et al,

I love the book! Zombies are a personal obsession of mine, and the book has held true to the old, shambling, Romero zombies I love the most—the heck with this newfangled running fad.

As so often happens, despite having enjoyed the whole run, I've not written until today because I have a little quibble.

In The Walking Dead №63, you have Father in a theological discussion with Eugene. Eugene says, "The rule is, in order to get into heaven, you not only have to do good deeds and not do bad deeds. You also have to accept Jesus Christ as your personal savior?" and the priest agrees. I can't remember whether you noted whether he was Catholic, Episcopalian or other, although the church is very classic American Protestant. However, I can't think of a single large denomination of Christians who would agree with Eugene's statement so unequivocally. A Catholic (which I am), for example, would agree with the first part, about good works being necessary for salvation, while a Reformation-influenced Protestant would strongly disagree.

Likewise, the second part, accepting Christ as your personal savior, is almost word-for-word the language of Baptists and others who reject salvation by works. Also, there aren't a whole lot of Christians who would say, or say absolutely, that all non-Christians, having heard of Jesus or not, are damned to hell. Southern Baptists would be one of the few, and even there (since there's no absolute teaching

body, as with the Catholic Magisterium) there is disagreement. Here's an article from my local newspaper that touches on a few of the differences:

<http://www.rickross.com/reference/fundamentalists/fund211.html>

I stridently disagree with the idea that a God who is love would do such a thing, so it was troubling to see it presented as an authoritative position, especially when there is so much disagreement with that theological idea especially in contemporary churches. As it notes in the article, the current Pope has said that it's not non-Christians but rather bad Christians, as ones who know the truth and don't live according to it, who will be punished most severely. Unfortunately, most people don't go to the source to learn what a particular religion or denomination teaches, and there's a lot of misinformation spinning around, especially in the news and entertainment media, and on the internet. I did appreciate that Father got some points in on Eugene in the discussion as well—one-sided is never good in a debate!

Like I said, only a quick thing, and don't let the length of it think that it'll make me stop reading The Walking Dead (or Invincible, or Destroyer, or The Astounding Wolf-Man). This is no KIRKMAN YOU HAVE OFFENDED ME AND I REFUSE TO PUT EYES TO ANYTHING YOU PRODUCE letter.

Michael

No worries, Michael. I apologize for the misrepresentation. In my mind, I think of Gabriel as a Baptist, despite the fact that I don't know of any Baptist preachers who wear the collar... but hey—I'm sure one of them is out there. Anyway, if anything I'd say Gabriel won the argument. Despite my stance as an atheist, I tried to be as even-handed as possible here. I just thought the science guy wouldn't hesitate to get into a discussion with the religion-guy once they got bored.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Thank you very much for this book, my name is Cédric and I'm a French reader of comics for 15 years now and I want to tell you that your work is really appreciated in France. All my friends who have read The Walking Dead have loved it. Each month, it's becoming like a drug and I eat literally your book :). I like your story, your cliffhangers (it's very rare nowadays to have a true cliffhanger in each issue) and your characters even if I know that they will die one day in one of your stories.

I eat literally your book... it's moments like this that make the letters column worthwhile.

1) Is it possible in a future story to have a French tourist for example who doesn't speak English meeting or joining Rick's crew on the road? It could be fun, no?

Well, I don't speak French and really don't know much about the French (you guys can fly right?) so it might be fun... but not for me! I'd have to do research!

2) Could you give us some news of Image United or Haunt?

Haunt will be in stores a few weeks after this very issue, so I don't really need to say much about that. Just buy it, it's awesome. Image United will be released in November... and holy heck is it amazing. Larsen, Liefeld, McFarlane, Portacio, Silvestri and Valentino... all drawing a book together? It's going to be great! And I'm writing it! You'll love it. Buy it. Six issues, starting in November. Sweet!

3) What do you think of your character Eric O'Grady in his new team (Thunderbolts)?

It's great to see him still kicking around and doing his thing. I hope he's around for a good long time. It's always gratifying to have something you create for Marvel to live on past your time with him. I love it.

All of you are doing an amazing job so don't stop, thanks guys!

Cédric C.

We won't do it. Promise.

Mr. Kirkman,

I just finished reading №63, and while I'm not the type to write a letter, I am the type that reads the letters in the back of your book. However, something you said in a response to a letter really struck a cord with me. A reader criticized you for not SHOWING flashbacks. You responded by explaining to the reader that it was more important to show the character, thinking about their story as they tell it. I have to applaud you for this. Too often writers fall back on flashbacks, forgetting that the TELLING of the story is JUST as important as what actually happened. Bravo to you for sticking to your guns with this technique.

Well, the writing rule is show, not tell... but y'know... I figured I'd give it a shot with this book and it seems to work out okay.

Also, since I'm writing, I have to comment on issue №63. Cannibals? Really? I'm skeptical as of now. But I have faith—you have come up with some of the most terrifying bad guys I've ever read. The Governor was ranked by IGN as the 86th comic book villain of all time. You were ROBBED! That guy did, and still does, scare me. As I said, I'm skeptical about the new villains, but I've learned that sticking with The Walking Dead pays off in spades.

Thanks for a great book and years of entertainment!

Trey Gregory

Trust me, man... we'll be okay. Cannibals will be fine.

Hey Robert,

I have been reading The Walking Dead since issue №10 and look forward to the read every month. I love the series and the characters and am eagerly waiting to see what unfolds on the trip to Washington. I am writing this letter, however, to urge you to remove the white banner that has appeared on the top of the comic with the "Fear the Hunters" arc. Having the title and the number of issues of the arc out on the cover takes me out of the story. I liked that The Walking Dead is one long story with mini-arcs along the way but feel the story is better served when the marketing aspects such as these are not used. So many comics publish stories to fit trade publications that certain pacing becomes more obvious when you know how many issues there are in the story. Now, perhaps you will play with those conventions to throw things off but I would prefer the mystery of not really knowing when a particular arc is going to end.

Just my two coppers. Otherwise keep up the great work!

Christian

Well, normally I'd be inclined to agree with you but I've heard from a number of retailers and they've all said that the storyline with the title heading on the cover has actually tremendously helped sales. Now, we all know The Walking Dead is a successful book (thank you all) but hey—I'm not going to pass up additional sales for anything.

So, it looks like moving forward, we might do this once a year or so, when there's an important story happening. I do promise to use it sparingly.

And there you go... another letters column down. Yeah. I'll see you all back here next month.

-Robert Kirkman

P.S. Cory Walker has downloaded the new PATTON OSWALT CD (legally, from iTunes) and is listening to it in the studio... and it's HILARIOUS and I've been listening to it the whole time I did this letters column... and well, there are probably more typos than usual in this letters column.



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hooboy, this issue should be a poster child for the power of two-page spreads and silent pages in comics. Hello, readers, Amanda here. That opening is what I'd call a "full apocalypse" moment, because for our group, this is truly done in the interest of survival, but gosh, if it isn't haunting. And what a way to wrap up the Fear the Hunters mini arc as well. It's almost like the fear was really for the hunters we met along the way.

Next month we're back with new letters and a new connecting set of covers by the very talented Conor Hughes! Carrying us into unknown territory for our heroes, be sure to check it out! Until then, some classic letters below.

And that brings us to a close on this chapter of The Walking Dead. The FEAR THE HUNTER story arc is wrapped, my friends.

Exciting stuff, we really had a blast telling this story. It was something I'd wanted to fit in for some time. I hope you all enjoyed it. I'm sure you can tell from this storyline that there are big changes in store for our characters in the coming months... and starting next issue, you'll get a sense of what's in store.

I'm very excited about what's coming up, in fact, if I'm honest, this is the most excited I've ever been about this book and to feel this way after spending SIX YEARS working on this series makes me feel even better about the future of this book.

Charlie, Cliff, Rus and Aubrey... hold onto your hats, or in Aubrey's case, bonnet, because it's going to be a fun ride over the next year.

Now, onto some mail.

Kirkman, you cliffhanging bastard!

Seriously, you drive me insane with the cliffhangers you write. Not because they are bad but because sometimes I think I'll go insane waiting for a month to see how they play out. Thanks for the consistent quality you bring to this series. I've seen a lot of people saying it's the best zombie comic out there but I think that does it a real disservice because it's not just the best zombie comic, it's the best ongoing series, period, in any genre. I just finished issue №64 and I have to say I'm really excited to see where things go. Note: Perfect ending with Rick. Hell, yeah.

I saw yesterday that Frank Darabont is in final talks with AMC for a Walking Dead television series. Needless to say I completely geeked out when I read that. Can you confirm this and if so, please keep us updated? Any thoughts on who you'd like to see play the main characters, if you had your dream choices?

All the best,

Shannon Teague

I can confirm that the Darabont/AMC deal is in fact REAL. We're all very excited about it. I will do my best to keep you posted here when there are things to talk about, but there will be times when I just can't really say anything because that's how these things work.

And please... don't email me about casting! My world is comics, I'm leaving the casting of this show in the capable hands of the people that do that kind of stuff on a regular basis.

Kirkman,

Was issue №64 the first full issue, including the cover, with no zombies? And people claim this series is just another zombie comic. The nerve!

You follow me?

Brandon Borzelli

It CAN'T have been the first issue without zombies. I think there has been a few. Could be wrong though. I really don't even pay attention.

Damn you, Kirkman. Damn you.

I swore you off once when Michonne was a torture toy for the Governor, but you pulled me right back in. I swore you off again when you killed Lori and Judith in issue №48 (You might remember our e-mail conversation where I accused you of taking the easy way out and you promised me you only did it because death can come at any time to get anyone).

I eventually realized that it bothered me so much because you told it so well. I had a strong emotional connection to the characters and I was pained by Rick's loss. So I manned up, grabbed the missing issues (luckily there are 3 comic shops in our town of

100,000), and I just finished issue №64.

Damn you Kirkman. You are still brilliant.

How far do you have all of this mapped out? Issue №75? Issue №100? Do you know what's waiting for them in Washington DC? Are they ever actually going to get there? Or are you just making it up as you go along?

Either way, I guess I'm going to swallow my pride and jump back on board.

Cheers!
Doug Turner

First, stop being a sissy! Bad things are going to happen to the people in this comic from time to time. Stop quitting every time things get rough, please! I don't want to drive readers away, that's the last thing I want. I'm glad you came back.

Now, as far as having things mapped out. I have enough plans to keep us going to issue 200, but they're just plans. Sometimes the order changes and sometimes new things pop up out of nowhere and I try to be flexible so that I can work things in. I try to have at least the next year plotted pretty solidly for marketing purposes and so that I can relax a little and remain sane (or nearly so). Past that, I have rough ideas that get rougher the farther things get. I try to map out big events, like the Shane Rick confrontation, then finding the prison, then the fight for the prison with Woodbury far in advance. Like those three things were in my head when I first started this series. But I had no idea how I was going to get to the prison, how long I was going to stay there, or any number of things I came up with along the way.

For instance, Wilshire Estates and the introduction of Tyreese were all fairly sudden decisions. And I just worked them in right away.

That's how it works.

Dear Walking Dead team,

Thank you for brightening up our lives with this series. When we read the first issue of The Walking Dead, our lives changed. We proceeded each in our own time to savagely eat through the series to the point where 2009 has been a painful waiting period month after month of expectance for our next fix. You guys are awesome! Don't change anything about the series, we love it as is!

Observations:

1) Its great how the story has grown into so much more than just Rick. I wouldn't be surprised if you decided to kill him, as the remaining characters have enough "glue" to go without him. Though I like him. Don't kill him just yet. Plus, Carl would really go psycho if you did.

That's true...

2) Speaking of Carl, love the way you've started to follow the thought of a new generation of individuals growing up in a world where the current context is "normal". Will the children of tomorrow bother with, say, learning to read and write?

I plan on dealing with that very soon. Stay tuned.

3) Its interesting how the lack of civilization really sets evolution back a step. It wouldn't be surprising if the next generation of individuals in the world you created were all proficient tree climbers, and superb athletes, in a world where there is no place for say, smart physicists.

Well, I don't think these things take effect that quickly, but yeah, I get what you're saying. One of the interesting things about this series for me is how it kind of turns the class system on its ear. The rich and powerful would be somewhat useless in this world.

4) Will the zombie apocalypse end in (a) all humans being transformed to zombies, (b) all zombies eventually dying out each in their own random way and (c) the world flourishing after our extinction? It's a sad cautionary tale...

I do hope to get to this point in the series a long, long time from now. We'll see. I know the answer, I'm just not going to say.

5) It'd be great to know how the zombie apocalypse is hitting other parts of the world. Will you ever tell us?

Eventually, in some way, yes.

Cheers from Mexico (old Mexico, not New Mexico),
Ursula and Eduardo

New Mexico is the lame Mexico. You're from the real deal!

Kirkman,

Wow! That was the best opening to a comic ever. I spend a lot of time thinking of zombie apocalypse scenarios (but then, who doesn't?) and I never thought of that. Unknowingly eating the body part of a live, but infected, individual...so genius. And Dale's reaction put a huge smile on my face. Finally, some justice in this world! I'm on the edge of my seat to see what the results will be of this "tainted meat"!

I also want to commend you on the story line with Ben. That was brave, and in my opinion, really accurate given the traumatic circumstances that the kids would be faced with.

Nyeland Newel
Fresno, CA

Thanks for writing, Nyeland. Glad you're liking this stuff.

Kirkman,

On the cover to issue №64, why does Rick have his gun holstered on his right side? Seems kinda hard to grab it with his nub, doesn't it? Unless he reaches across his body...

Keep up the good work,
Ryan McGovern

It's always been this way, and the answer is that Rick doesn't have a left-handed holster. He can't just go out and buy a new holster now that he's missing a hand. So he's making due with what he's got.

Mr. Kirkman,

Not to be a jerk, but I haven't been quite as interested in The Walking Dead in the more recent issues as I was in the first 30 issues or so. I say this with the caveat that even your relatively less compelling storytelling is about five times better than most people's best, so I've still read every issue. Well, issue №64 was a real payoff for me. This was good old-fashioned horror comic storytelling, and it was like a punch in the gut wrapped in awesome.

Finally! I'm turning this ship around!

1. Was the "tainted meat" thing a deliberate reference to the old EC Tales from the Crypt story? The one about the butcher that saves money by selling progressively less edible meat, until his son is unintentionally poisoned by some tainted meat that he sold? I'm pretty sure he also shouts "tainted meat." It must be, but if you haven't read it, I'd go find a copy. It's called "Taint the Meat, It's the Humanity." I looked it up.

I haven't read as much of the EC stuff as I'd like. So no, I have to chalk this up to coincidence. I'd totally admit it if it was a homage. Sorry.

2. Not a question, but bring back Ant-Man. DO IT!

Not up to me... and I'm kind of done with Marvel for now. Maybe someday but currently I have no desire to write for them again.

3. Have you ever seen Cube? I thoroughly enjoyed it. If you did as well, skip Cube 2 and watch Cube Zero, the prequel. Trust me.

Always a pleasure,
Mered Parnes Brooklyn

I've never seen any of the Cube movies. I'll have to

look them up.

Hey there, Walking Dead dudes,

Long time reader, first time etc. Just got hold of issue №64 and it's a blast, as ever, but something occurs to me. It may be that I'm just an old dude and that other Walking Dead readers don't have the same problem but... 64 issues in, I'm not always clear on who everybody is. Don't take that as an insult to your narration skills, it isn't meant to be. I mean, I know who Rick is and Andrea is and - I know who most people are. But from time to time (like, say, in the few pages where we saw everybody sleeping in issue №62), I find myself thinking: Who is that again?

I know in the TPBs you always list the current roster of characters but I wonder is it possible on the inside front cover of each edition, alongside the two or three lines you have to bring people up to speed with the plot, to give us a head and shoulders shot with bio for each currently living character? I know you'll probably say space doesn't allow it but - ask yourself if repeating the name of the comic on the inside front cover is entirely necessary. You drop that you've got a whole heap of space...

Maybe I'm being a dick. If I am, sorry. Truly. The comic is a fine one. A great one. I buy each month and will go on buying. Keep up the good work!

Con amistad,
Peter Wild

It's a valid complaint and to be honest it's not the first time I've heard it. I do apologize, but the thing is, this is a black and white comic, about normal people. It's not always going to be easy to tell people apart. We try to keep hair color and skin tone pretty varied to help things along, but it's hard. I don't want to resort to relying on a character list in the front of the book because that seems kind of cheap and most people would skip it anyway. And I certainly don't want to alter the story to have people saying each others names to an unrealistic degree.

So... just pay more attention! And we'll do our part by introducing more characters with unique facial hair, scars or tattoos and big giant hats. The bigger the better.

We'll get through this, I promise.

And that brings us to the end of another letters column. Woo! I'll see you all back here very soon for issue 67, which will be a hoot.

Woo!

-Robert



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hey there, Letter Hacks, Amanda here. We're back with a new story arc, and there's nothing like kicking things off with a new arrival – in the middle of the night no less. Good thing our group definitely isn't on edge after recent events, hah...

We've got some new letters below, and I don't want to fail to mention our latest connecting cover set by the very talented Conor Hughes! Conor's set takes us through the next leg of this journey as the group pushes onward towards Washington, D.C., even if now we know the state of things isn't what Eugene cracked them up to be.

I'm really excited to have Conor on these covers. I've admired his work for a long time. If you haven't read White Ash, you should really check it out. It's a cool book and Conor's work in it is just stunning.

Hello Robert Kirkman and the rest of The Walking Dead team.

First, I just want to mention that this past year I decided to read the entire The Walking Dead for the very first time. It had always been one of those books that I'd heard so much about and really wanted to read, but never had the chance to do so. But this past Christmas, I was bequeathed with all 4 compendiums of The Walking Dead. So I figured, if I'm going to read Walking Dead, I might as well do it now. I'm not exaggerating or speaking in hyperbole when I say this, but The Walking Dead is one the greatest comics ever made. Now, I was already a huge fan of Robert from books like Fire Power and Invincible (which remains my all time favorite comic series ever) but reading through Walking Dead truly cemented him as my all time favorite writer. But what I really love about Walking Dead is how it was able to go BEYOND the printed page with several television shows and video games being

made that were based off the book. But, this led me to something interesting. The Walking Dead show had many characters like Darryl or Merle that were created specifically for the show. So, my question is, were there any plans to introduce the tv characters into the comics or were they strictly going to be tv exclusive characters?

Much love,
Owen Seyler

While I had a hand in creating Daryl and Merle, it was very much a team effort involving other season one writers Jack LoGiudice and Charles H. Eglee, as well as Frank Darabont (who originated and named them). A cool thing in TV is that the actors also have a huge hand in who their characters become just in the way they interpret lines. Surprising line reads inspire the writers to write the characters completely differently as the series progresses. So, I'd also credit Michael Rooker and Norman Reedus with a lot of what makes those characters work. While there are ALSO logistical issues that barred bringing TV show characters into the comics, I would never have done it because it would feel wrong to bring the work of so many other people into the comic.

I never wanted the show to change the comic, since the comic is what made the show possible, and I worried it could turn into a snake eating its own tail.

All that said, doing fun things like making comic readers think DWIGHT might be Daryl when introducing him? That kind of stuff is fun.

Dear Kirkman,

Would you believe that TWD has triggered trans-Atlantic friendships? The three of us met during an early Big Clutch

/ Skybound CVL gig looking for Walking Dead Deluxe foil covers. We followed up through the CGC website, and have made several comic trades. In 2020, Brian was "Huckleberry" for Stephen, buying a few items for him as the CVL gig was in the middle of the night UK time.

In January 2022, we met up in Austin Texas, as Stephen visited some of the FTWD filming locations around the city. We went for Tex-Mex, and really hit it off. We shared some of our rarer comic specimens, such as the uniquely sketched "Hero" editions of №100. In January 2023, we did it again, with a promise to see each other again in 2024.

Can you believe that your spark for a black and white zombie book back in the 2000's could lead to this exceptional trans-Atlantic friendship 20 years later? What friendships have surprised you the most as a result of The Walking Dead?

Stephen Asbury, Tom McElroy & Brian Lassiter
Ashbourne, UK and Austin, Texas USA

Not specifically TWD related, but this is awesome! Some of my best friendships have been the folks I've met in comics, so I wish you all a lot of future encounters!

That's awesome to hear, Stephen, Tom, and Brian! It's always great to hear these things. Maybe if I find myself in Austin at the right time, we can all get Tex-Mex together!

Dear Mr Kirkman and Crew

Can't believe we are already about to be at the Fear The Hunters storyline. This storyline is possibly my favorite in the whole series; well, the overall story of them being on the road more specifically. Just the way that the characters had to turn into complete savages was awesome. I've always wanted a tattoo of Rick biting a dudes throat out and I think the cover for Issue №57 may be what will be on my body as some point - that cover is by far the best in the series so far in my opinion. Anyways...what was your favorite storyline if you absolutely had to pick one in the entire series?

It's hard for me to pick one, I don't know. Maybe the end?

P.S - Do you have ADHD? The randomness of your Cutting Room Floor has me laughing all the time. My ADHD mind can relate.

I... well... I'm pretty sure I do. I've never been diagnosed, but both of my kids were, and when it was being explained to me my reaction was, "Oh, that's not how everyone's brain works... huh." Funny that it comes through in my writing.

(DO ANOTHER ON THE ROAD STORY WITH NEGAN!)

Thanks for reading!

Matthew and Elsie Short
Monterey, Tennessee

Maybe I'll come back to Negan someday, but unfortunately, no plans at the moment.

Sup Kirkman & team!

This is the first time I've written to TWD or any comic for that matter. I started reading TWD like two years ago when I was 14. I'd mostly heard about the AMC show because my parents used to watch it, but I always read the book before I watch a TV show or movie based on one. I bought the first and second trade paperbacks and I couldn't get enough of TWD. A couple weeks later I bought the whole first compendium, and when I finished that I bought the rest. This series fuckin rocks man!

When I found out about TWD Deluxe I had to start collecting it. It's my first time collecting a comic, but TWD has a special place in my heart so I decided to give it a try. I love the cutting room floor!! I've heard that you guys are printing new letters sometimes in TWD Deluxe or something like that? Anyway, that's why I wrote.

You heard right, here we are!

I've also heard that the best way to

get printed is numbered questions and criticizing Kirkman. So here we go!

I can tell you HAVE been reading.

1. I'm gonna be totally honest... I fuckin HATED the AMC show with a PASSION. I didn't start watching it until I'd read all the comics and it bothers the hell outta me that it's so different than the comic! What's the deal with that?! Andrea dies like right away?! Judith doesn't die?! And who's this Daryl guy?!

Well, when you adapt things, things change along the way. Everyone's opinions are valid, but I think you'd have a hard time arguing that Daryl's addition into the show wasn't a good move (and it doesn't seem like you are arguing that). Frankly, I pushed for a lot of those changes because I was pretty hands on with the show up through season 5, I wasn't in the writer's room much (if at all) past that season. So I didn't want to tell the same story again because that would be boring.

I've learned my lesson a little with INVINCIBLE (now on Prime, season 2 coming soon) and have found other ways to keep myself engaged without telling completely different stories.

2. Why didn't you fix any of the mistakes in the art when you started TWD Deluxe, like Rick's regrown hand?

We forgot? We really meant to. The thing is... we fixed Rick's regrown hand about a hundred times over the course of this series... and one (or more) just slipped through! In Charlie's defense, I would often write Rick doing things without detailing in the script how he does them with one hand... so a big part of it is my fault.

3. Is there gonna be a sequel to Negan Lives? I fuckin loved Negan Lives. Or can we get a spin off about Claudia from TWD The Alien?

No and no! Sorry. Right now, the focus is getting through this deluxe reprinting of the full series. After that... we'll just have to see.

That's all I've got for you. Its an understatement to say it would totally make my day if this got printed. Thanks for your awesome series and all the hard work you put into it.

-Francis Rutherford

Consider your day made, Francis!

Hello Deluxe team!

I read the series as it was being published (started with №4) and I never "needed" the book to be in color, but it has been enjoyable to re-read in the deluxe format. I don't have a clear memory of a lot of the stuff from 50-100 so reading them now is great because I'm surprised by developments and twists that I absolutely forgot about. I love reading the cutting room floor material too even though there are rarely massive shifts like "Carl attacks Rick and leaves the group" etc. It's still a neat look into your writing process, and stunning to me that you would write a draft and send it to Charlie and that was that. I love the new art for the various covers, I always get the Julian Tedesco when he does one as they have been incredible. I also want to highlight that this book has a great format, good paper stock and nice cardstock covers while still only being \$3.99. between the paper shortage and the "Big Two" having an increase in \$4.99 titles it's definitely got my wallet in the headlock as I average 10-15 titles a week, not complaining, I love single issues. Robert thanks for doing the deluxe format instead of rubbing your billions all over your body and ogling your shelf of prime-time Emmys, you've always been a creator that cares about us Wednesday warriors and giving back to comic shops with new material that makes Wednesday the "Christmas day" of every week.

Yours Eternally,
Andy Bobo
Grand Rapids, MI

Andy, first and foremost, thank YOU for supporting not just TWD but comics in general. It's always great to hear folks are still out there grabbing singles! I always feel

like for books price \$4.99 or higher, you need to be either really targeted in what you're asking people to spend that on, or make sure there's a good bang for your buck in the interior content and a big double-sized (or more) issue.

Lordy, how often are Marvel and DC selling their normal-sized comics printed on tissue paper for \$4.99? The thing that always drives me crazy is that when I started working in comics, my self-published indie book was \$2.99 because most indie books were at that price point. Marvel and DC, the big, huge companies with the even bigger parent companies, were a DOLLAR cheaper. Because they sold volume. Then at some point... they just decided to sell comics for even more. And fun fact, IDW pioneered the \$3.99 price point because when Marvel and DC jumped to \$2.99 IDW rightly said, "Our books should be more, we move less volume." And eventually Marvel said, "Wait a minute, people will buy IDW books for \$3.99?! They'll definitely pay that much for ours!" and raised their prices. So for the longest time, Image titles were a dollar CHEAPER than your average Marvel and DC book (which should tell you Marvel and DC's reasons for the price hikes are... often... just greed). The thing I'm trying to get at is that prices are just going to keep going up if people keep paying them. Marvel will debut an 18-page \$7.99 comic in a heartbeat.

Oh... also... I have ZERO Emmys.

Dear Robert Kirkman

Hi! Long time reader, first time writer (bet you never heard that before) I wanna start off by saying that The Walking Dead deluxe is the ULTIMATE way to experience the walking dead comics. I've read most of them in black and white and it didnt have the same PUNCH the colored ones have.

I'll jump in to the questions:

1. Other than collecting the walking dead comics, I LOVE collecting the walking dead figures, its like having a piece of the comic in 3D form, more

specifically the skybound exclusive figures!!! Ive been wondering if we're ever gonna get more? I would LOVE more comic characters in figure form!

There are more WALKING DEAD action figures in the works. I imagine they'll be announced soon.

2. I've been rewatching the TV show with my girlfriend who had never seen it before and she's loving it! Has the show done something that you think improved from the comics? If so, what?

Carol's story is definitely significantly improved in the show. The comic Carol sucks. TV Carol is pretty much the best character in the whole damn series.

I hope to see this in a future letterhack!!! If I make it I there i'm definately getting two copies of whichever issue it ends up being, one of them to take the response page out and frame it!

Noel Julian from Puerto Rico

That was two copies now, yeah?

Robert,

While I am still thoroughly enjoyed The Walking Dead Deluxe, I have a suggestion--or, really, more of a question. What are the chances of Robert Kirkman restarting TWD when the Deluxe series runs it's course to issue №193 (or whatever number it stopped at)?? After all, you stopped doing what is probably your best series ever just on the spur of the moment! Also, this: That series No/One from Image? Can't stand it; two of my favorite writers but, it's not for me.

Cheers,
Andrew J. Shaw

Andrew, oh how I've missed you! Thanks so much for writing in. Negative comments about a random other comic? Bold. To be clear, THE WALKING DEAD didn't just end on a spur of the moment. It was planned for nearly six years. I just didn't tell anyone. Or really, most anyone. A few people knew.

Anyway, the chances of me resuming THE WALKING DEAD with issue #194 after this series is completed... are very low. But I do have years to make that decision and a few covers are already drawn!

Okay, I think we packed a nice chunk of new mail in, so that wraps us up for now. See you back here in six more issues. In the meantime, classic Letter Hacks are always on the menu.

-Amanda LaFranco

MMMM, there's nothing better than classic Letter Hacks. I hope I say "I'll never do this series in color" a few more times. Those are always fun. See you all back here in six issues for more fresh letter replying! Now go read Cutting Room Floor!

-Robert Kirkman

And here we are at issue 67. Nothing really to report here... kind of swamped actually, so I'm just going to dive right in!

Dear Mr.Kirkman

I just finished issue №65 and I have to say "Nicely done, brother." By the end of the issue I was cheering out loud. It was nice to have the issue leave off on a high note instead of the usual paranoid dread for my beloved survivors. I was so certain that the "Fear the Hunters" story arch was going to leave me drenched in gut-wrenching horror of having lost yet another chunk of the cast I have come to care so much for. Hell, I'm still feeling the loss from issue №48's mass character massacre! Keep up the good work guys.

Your loyal reader... Gabriel Casanova

Well, I'm not really a big fan of repeating oneself, so I wouldn't expect that in this series too terribly often... or hopefully, ever.

Letter Hacks,

Recently I suffered a crisis of faith: I removed The Walking Dead from my pull-list after №63. The details behind the decision are a bit fuzzy, but nevertheless it was a mistake. I somehow ended up with №64 anyway and said to myself, "Fuck that. I can't quit this book!" I've been reading since №50. It's too good to miss. I'm sorry I ever doubted you for some reason.

Also, thanks for printing Chew in the back of №62. It convinced me that I had missed out and got me to buy all the missed issues, adding to the list of amazing Image titles I feel I could read forever.

Regarding Haunt, will that book have a letters page? I can't get enough letters pages. I love Image.

Jacob Lee

Glad you're enjoying CHEW, and shame on you for even thinking about dropping this book. SHAME! Haunt will have a letters column of some kind. It's going to be fun!

Hey Rob-o,

Can I call you Rob-o?

No. Please don't.

Okay, cool. This is my second time writing you a letter. You posted the first one so you better post this one, too! Nah it's cool if you don't; just as long as YOU read this!

First I want to tell you I got my brother hooked on the series. He's not a comic guy but I told him The Walking Dead is different! He finally came around. More importantly, I made him buy everything and refused to loan him any of my TWD goodies, so I got some more cash in your pocket. He bought all four hardcovers! Very cool. I told him not to wait for hardcover №5 because you guys are really bad with shipdates on those. Sorry but the truth hurts, man. Good news is he is going with the softcovers.

But I'm not that bad with those... they ship on time for the most part... don't they? Sheesh.

Now that he's getting caught up, I told him the one prediction I have had all along is that Carl and Sophie are going to hook up someday. My brother agrees though we both know you are a heartless bastard so we won't get our hopes up too much.

Well, they are the only two characters in the book in that age group... so that's a reasonable assumption. At least for now...

We got to talking about how damn long it will take for them to actually become teens. I told him over the past 6 years you have been writing it, only 1-2 years have passed in the series. So we figure we might not be around when several years have passed in the series. We are 32 and 39, FYI. While I'm more than happy to be put in my grave knowing that Walking Dead is still going strong, we continued the conversation by theorizing that you might do a "time jump" in the series. You know, a fade to black and then the "Several years later..." bit. I told him I didn't think you would do that, but I'm wondering if you would comment on it? Will you give me an outright "No way that is going to happen," "No comment," or one of those wuss "Anything is possible" cop outs?

So far... only ONE year has passed in the series. The book started in autumn of one year and it's now autumn again. So we're a little over a year in. Regarding time jumps, I will only say that I hate them. When I read books it frustrates me when there's a huge gap in time. I might have time move faster at times, for instance, a few weeks (at least) passed between the end of last issue and the beginning of this issue. That may happen more often.

Thanks for the good times, man. I will see you in Baltimore next month! I'm driving several hours to see you so you better do some back flips or something for my son (age 13). He loves everything you write.

Dave

Did I see you? I hope I was friendly.

Dear Kirkman,

Two things:

1) I love you book. It's totally awesome. Possibly my favorite book going on right now.

I agree!

2) It seems like it's been a really long time since it's been winter in the world of The Walking Dead. What gives? Thanks, please keep being awesome.

Eighn

It's coming, don't worry... I'm paying attention.

Dear Kirk o' Man,

I'd like to start the ol' cliched way by saying that I love this series. I've read World War Z, Day by Day Armageddon, and this comic series seems to be more addicting than both those books combined. Which, if you haven't read those, you should, they are quite good!

I love the surprises you fill each issue with, big and small. Such as in №65 where Rick just kind of shows up while Chris and everyone were sitting there plotting and starts conversing with them.

Anyhow, I was thinking of something after recently seeing all this hubbub about the flooding in Georgia this week. What would you think about adding maybe a couple of issues where the group is having to deal with a huge storm and possible flooding? I mean, with visibility reduced and whatnot, I think it would up the fright factor by at least a few points. The flooding would be interesting too, especially if the zombies could just kinda walk underwater and be hidden from view and then just pop right out of it at the worst possible moment.

I'm sure you get plennnnnty of suggestions, but I thought I'd throw an idea your way! That's all I have to say, besides that, again, this series is awesome!

Be well,
Jake Godin

Sadly, I don't do a lot of weather in my comics... it's just not on my mind a lot (I think it's because I spent most of my time inside where the weather is nice). But it's something I've recognized as a problem and would like to remedy soon. So while I can't say we'll be doing a flood... we'll for sure be seeing more weather from time to time.

Dear supreme zombie overlord,

I was re-reading volume one the other day when I noticed Jim the mechanic – I completely even forgot he existed. This got me curious so I decided to flip through all the early volumes and I was surprised to see how many characters I had forgotten about. This got me thinking – you should do a “What if?” issue were you pick characters who died early in the series and put them in an issue with everyone who is currently alive. I can't speak for anyone else but I would buy that issue in a heartbeat.

Abe Martha

That just seems like a distraction to me. I'd rather move forward and get to more story with the characters who did survive.

PS: Please kill Dale, all he does is bitch now and its getting rather annoying.

Your wish is my command.

Hello Mr. Kirkman,

I know you must get this a lot but I am a big fan of The Walking Dead. It has seriously changed my life, no lie! As a fellow writer it's amazing how you keep us all anticipating every issue every month. I read somewhere that you have enough ideas to keep the series running for over 500 issues! I really can't wait to see what sort of surprising and disturbing and above all amazing things you have in store for us.

Well, I'm sure I will eventually have enough

ideas to get us to 500... I'm currently only at issue #312.

I do have a few questions:

1. We haven't seen Michonne “talking” to her boyfriend for some time now. Does she still do it? Will we see her do it again?

We'll see it again from time to time, yes.

2. In issue №65 (which was %a@^&* awesome) I was surprised to see that Rick intentionally WANTED to go toward danger. I figured after the prison incident that he would try his best to stay away from danger. Don't get me wrong, he did have a good idea but then again he did also during the prison saga and look where it lead him.

You can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs, am I right? Am I right?

3. I also read your other comic, Invincible every month I wait till they both come out and read them both. I call it my “Kirkman power hour!” I have noticed in each comic book that the characters often need to bite the neck of their attacker. A few times in TWD and a few times in Invincible. Would you say that's your trademark? Characters biting each other's necks? LOL

Your biggest fan,
Mohamed Obsieyeh

I am just in a rut. Sorry. It's actually best if you not read all my books at the same time... I think there may be an embarrassing degree of crossover from time to time. I've just been in a neck-bitey mood for a while now, I guess.

Anyway, kids. Another issue down! I'll see you all back here next month! Wee!

-Robert Kirkman



WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hello, readers, Amanda here. Big things a-comin' for our group! I always appreciate the moments of humor in TWD, probably because in this world, there are so few opportunities for jokes, but this issue has a handful. My favorite though, the quiet beat after Glenn's given Aaron the machine gun to dispatch the walkers. "THAT gun?" At least this Aaron fella seems like a good dude. We've got big things ahead next issue! Who's ready to see the nation's capital? Stick around and take a gander at these classic letters from back at the tail-end of 2009.

Welcome to issue 68. Whoopee!

I need to point out that this issue marks the end of our big "on time in '09" year-long endeavor to get my books out on time every month for a full year. I'm happy to report that we made it. This issue, like the other 11 of this year will be hitting on its exact solicited ship date. So yeah.

I can't take much... or well, any of the credit, because all I really did was keep up with Charlie, who is a machine... and he picked up my slack on more than one occasion over the year... so a big round of applause for Charlie Adlard.

Cliff Rathburn and Rus Wooton also deserve a big pat on the back. They also did a swell job of keeping up with Charlie.

So in celebration of meeting our deadlines... we're planning on meeting all of our deadlines next year, and beyond. We have no plans to fall off the wagon any time soon.

Pretty cool, huh?

So yeah... let's answer some mail.

Kirkman,

I think The Walking Dead №66 is one of the best issues I have read from this series. It shows the extremes this group will go to in order to survive. That being said, I just wish we could have seen a moment between Glenn and Dale. Glenn is the one surviving adult from the original group that we did not see speak with Dale after he was infected. They might not have spoken a lot within the comic, but I like to think outside of the panels they had some interesting conversations. I see Dale, the oldest one of the bunch, giving advice to Glenn, the youngest adult of the bunch. Especially after Glenn's marriage to Maggie. Wouldn't Dale give Glenn some matrimonial advice? I like to think he did. That being said, I think Glenn was spot on at Dale's funeral. Dale was not a burden on anyone and he ended up being the one who warned the group about the hunters. Anyway, keep up the great work and I promise not to stop buying the comic and forcing my roommates to read it. And by the way, Glenn has been one of my favorite characters from day one.

Aaron Valdivia

Well, there are downsides to having a book with such a large cast. There are concessions that have to be made from time to time to leave room for other things. I certainly would have liked to have had a scene between Glenn and Dale--but I don't think they have a relationship quite like you imagined, so I don't feel like we lost much by not having a scene between them.

PS: I'd be interested to know how Mexico has been doing during this crisis. Will you ever show what's happening beyond the United States?

I will only show how things are in another country if the characters go to another country or meet someone who has been in another country. I like keeping things vague. Maybe things aren't so bad in other countries--maybe they're worse.

Dear Kirkman,

Thank you for making and continuing to make The Walking Dead. Even as I grow tired of the sickening amount of zombie films, books, games, comics, and other forms of media around me, The Walking Dead remains one of the best products dealing with zombies ever created. Now, on to my question: Do you ever get frustrated by how slowly you are forced to tell a story through the comic book medium? Last issue you wrote that you had ideas for the next 200 issues of The Walking Dead. I realized that roughly equates to the next 16 years. Is there any chance you could take a single arc of issues and publish that first as a graphic novel instead of it taking five or so months? I'm not really that familiar with the comic book industry, so I don't know if that sort of thing is done. Anyway, I was just curious. The prospect of spending 16 more years reading The Walking Dead certainly sounds amazing to me.

Thanks,
Eric

It's not as though we could just put out a 120-page graphic novel one month instead of releasing a 22-page comic... not without spending every waking moment for a year doing extra work. On average, it takes a comic book artist one day to do an entire page. Sometimes more, sometimes less, but on average it ends up taking 22 workdays to produce 22 pages of comics. Charlie is a little bit faster--but most artists are slower than

that, hence the wealth of fill-in issues out there. There are 22 workdays in the average month... that's why monthly comics are 22 pages. So the work, and the time it takes to do, dictates the schedule.

16 years certainly does sound like a lot of time—but I have no plans on quitting any time soon. As long as people are digging this series, and we're all still enjoying ourselves... we'll keep it going.

Kirkman,

While I found this storyline to be incredible I was at first disappointed with the ending of it in issue №66.

When Rick is speaking to whom he assumed was Abraham I was thinking something totally different. I felt the “<krik>” sound effect was one of three things. I was sure it was either a hunter that they missed, the priest packing some heat or a zombie coming in too close. You can imagine how shocked I was at what really caused the noise.

Then I realized what makes this series so brilliant is I simply can't predict what you have in store for the readers. Now I am of the mindset that an issue could probably only disappoint me if I could successfully guess the entire issue's contents prior to reading it.

Nicely done,
Brandon Borzelli

PS: Does Axel have a brother out there? I really miss him.

I miss him, too. As tempted as I am, I could never do something as lame as introducing a twin brother or something. My hope with the TV show is that characters like Axel and Tyreese will make it into the show and I'll get to write/see them again in some capacity.

Dead Heads,

FEAR THE HUNTERS was fantastic! Totally blew me away! It is so great to see our party flex their muscle. Who says this isn't a SUPERHERO book?! Michonne, Abraham, and Rick, are at least as tough as that pussy Nick Fury and the Black fucking Widow! Not to mention Carl is as badass as 11-year-old Robin. It seems there wasn't too much to fear about the hunters after our guys got pissed. It was just really nice to see our people win and hand the bad guys their asses without someone getting away like all the other comics do I am a total fan of mutilation and I really dug the way you presented it. The two-page-spreads were totally awesome. Rick and the others looked like the bad guys the way they were drawn all foreboding and shit.

A fan of mutilation?

It is nice to see Carl in the book. I love that Rick was scared that Carl would think he is a monster and hate him if he knew what they did to the hunters and that it ended up being Carl he was talking to the whole time instead of Abe (But it seems a little strange that Rick is scared that Carl will see him as a monster because of the hunters. Wasn't it just a few issues ago that Carl watched his dad shred the guy who tried to rape him? If I remember correctly, Carl had a slightly satisfied look on his face as he watched). Now Carl can tell that he offed that bitch Ben and still be accepted by his daddy. I think it is going to be a very interesting to see how Rick reacts now that he knows Carl is a cold-blooded killer too. I am guessing that it will be an ongoing theme of the book for a while (as he tries to make his boy less of a murderer while still keeping him alive in a world that is fucked in the head). It reminds me of the fear that Mark has about Oliver being too cold-blooded.

The fact that Rick feels so strongly about what he did to the hunters is meant to indicate just how intense what you didn't see was. Rick crossed another line

beyond beating Carl's potential rapist to a pulp.

Anyway I think the real fear that the hunters presented was the philosophical kind. Rick is starting to wonder if living like a total animal is what he wants for himself and his son. It keeps them alive, but is the way they are living worth it?

I am all for turning them into murdering, raping, pillaging cannibals but, that is just me.

No matter how you deal with it I will be reading and loving it. I might get a tattoo that says "Kirkman Rocks" on my ass!

Allen S.

Yeah, moving along...

Dear Kirkman,

I've been a reader since issue №1 and something that has been bothering me ever since the start of the series is the coma that Rick was in. This makes me question if he ever truly woke up or has he been dreaming this for years? If you go back to the very first comic you will see that he's not in any form of protected room and the room does not even appear to have a door on it. It just seems unreal that he survived to the point of waking.

Then the events that take place: Everything from finding everyone that truly mattered to him all alive. Then, of course, he loses his best friend. These sort of ups and downs repeat throughout the series – just look at the prison and what happens afterward. To me it seems like a dream with a pattern. Then, of course, are the characters: Take Dale for instance - he seems to be (or rather was) a part of Rick. He even resembles him as if it was an older and wiser version. They even look similar. Then there is Tyreese, who easily could have been part of Rick's memory, as Rick was a football

fan. I mean, what are the chances of running into a former pro football player by pure luck? Then, of course, it could explain why he hears his wife's voice when he picks up that telephone, as Rick may not be crazy but it could just be part of the dream. If this is not a dream I do hope you can confirm it. If you don't I am stuck assuming it is unless you kill Rick and continue the comic.

Michael

It's not a dream. I feel like that would be a slap in the face to all the people who have been following this story for years... also, it's kind of a contrived story device. "It was all a dream" is not where this story is headed. I promise.

Hi,

Just a quick note to say thanks for an amazing series - it has brought this 42-year-old back into comic shops on a regular basis after an absence of many years. Compliments aside, what were you thinking with the cannibal storyline? I am sorry but it is just too unbelievable. Yeah, yeah, I know – what kind of crank has no problem believing in a zombie apocalypse but complains about cannibals, but allow me to explain my position...

My issue is simply one of trying to maintain an air of realism in the series. If the zombie apocalypse has decimated the human population, killing something in the order of 98% of the population, then there will be plenty of available food (canned and dry goods) on which the remaining people can survive. There would be no need to resort to cannibalism. I have no problem with the introduction of cannibalism into a story but it should flow logically from the situation. S.M. Stirling uses cannibalism very effectively in his Emberverse series. The reader has no problem believing in the reality of

cannibalism in these stories because the massive populations of our cities cannot be maintained without modern technology and transportation systems. Stirling introduces it in such a way that it makes horrific sense. I am sorry but having people – who must live in a semi-rural area or else would have more ready access to canned food supplies – complain about how hard it is to hunt animals does not logically explain a descent into cannibalism. Didn't you earlier have a zombie successfully kill a deer? A zombie can kill a deer but a human with a rifle could not?

Keep up the good work even when providing issues to debate. You keep producing and I will keep buying.

Thanks,
Wesley Rodney

They're in a largely rural area, where there aren't a lot of houses. There was a lot of looting during the early days of this worldwide catastrophe. So stores are ransacked and when people went into the cities for protection--they took food with them. So yeah, food is scarce in this area. And hunting enough game to keep a group fed on a regular basis... is difficult, especially if you've never hunted before. That opposed to just being able to trick someone into coming with you and killing them later... I know it's a hard leap to cannibalism, but these people were starving.

Hello Robert,

I'm really a big fan of this astonishing comic. Also I get that you plan on working on it for a long time, and aren't going to end the story for many years to come. Now I wonder, as with all big comics (especially manga) projects, what would happen if you would fall victim to, let's say, a zombie attack? :) Don't get me wrong, I really hope you will be able to show us your talent for many more years, but the possibility of death is always

present. For such a case, did you deposit the whole The Walking Dead storyline in a safe, so that anyone else could finish it? To be honest, I doubt so, as many events in the comic seem to be rather spontaneous. But still, please answer me this question (in the hope that I will outlive you anyway :)). (Sorry for my bad English, it's not my native one).

Greetings,
Slavisa

No, I do not have a "break glass in case of death" case in my house with 100 Walking Dead scripts in it. The thing is, I have rough plots stretching far into the future, but the story isn't written until I write the scripts. When I write the actual scripts, I move plans back/forward add/subtract and do all kinds of changes to allow the story to flow naturally and to accommodate any last-minute good ideas. At best... I'm only ever maybe 4 or 5 issues at most, ahead of the released comics. I do strive to get further ahead but it never seems to work out between the two kids and the various other projects I do.

So if I died today, issue 70 would be the last issue, but by the time this issue comes out, I'll probably be on 71 or 72. So... that's how many issues you'd have until it ran out.

But y'know, look at it from my perspective, sure you would never see the end of this thing... but I'D BE DEAD... and I'm sure that's no fun. So just y'know, live with it. At least you'd be alive.

That said, I'm 30 right now, so if nothing tragic happens, I hope to finish this series before I'm even remotely close to dying. Let's be honest, what are the odds of this thing lasting another 20 years? Surely by then I will have put aliens in this thing and run it into the ground.

slightly uncomfortable note, I bring this letters column to a close.

See you all back here next month, and next year. See you later 2009!!

-Robert Kirkman

And with that mostly depressing and



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Well, it's not a "spread of a head", but it is a "very large silent panel of a head", and what's that? Is that Rick with hope and wonder in his eyes? That's a look I've not seen since... well, maybe all the way back in issue #12. Amanda, here, hoping you're all having a wonderful summer, with the promise of great things ahead... just like Rick at the end of this issue. We're about mid-way through this arc, so still plenty of time for things to go wrong... OR right! It's all about perspective, and I want nothing but the best for all your summers.

We've got some classic hacks for you here from issue #69 (nice). A blast from the past, from the very start of 2010... which was a big year for TWD!

And here we are in the year 2010 with our sixty-ninth issue. Sweet.

I think we have a pretty busy year ahead of us. Hopefully things will continue moving smoothly (so far so good) on the AMC series. If everything works out the way it seems like it will, I think you'll all be very happy.

Also, we'll be hitting our big issue 75 this year... so that's going to be a big deal. Look for some cool announcements involving the series very soon. I'll do my best to get through issue 75 without jumping the shark and ruining everything... but seriously, I can't promise anything.

I'm kidding, I've never been more excited about this book. The things we have coming up are just way cool. It's going to be a good year.

So enough of that, let's get started. First letters column of the year!

To Kirkman, Charlie, and Cliff..

Due to my grave mistake in not giving comic books the time of day for the first 20 years of my life (I'm 22 now), I was a late-comer to The Walking Dead. Holy shit, what a work of art. Congratulations and thank you for doing something so original. now...on to business.

Often now when I'm in public places (Subway restaurant, the bank, at work, the comic book store...etc.) I look around and see people and picture them as survivors in my own zombie apocalypse...would I be able to befriend that guy making my sandwich? Or would he be trying to kill me and cook my legs? I've noticed that most of the people who seem like they would make decent "survivor friends" are the least conventionally successful people. Not in every case, but in many. I think it's cool that you seem to have noticed something like this as well, and have cast a lot of misfits in your story.

Just picked up and read №67. I'm by no means a crier...but you came pretty close to changing that with the Rick/Carl heart-to-heart...don't know why it got me so bad, but it really did. Nicely done. Carl's really growing fast. Which kind of segues into my only real question...Have you read The Road by Cormac McCarthy? It's a superb book, but the saddest I have ever read. Many elements of both stories are so similar, the Rick and

Carl stuff especially...Apologies if this has already been discussed and I missed it.

I think it has been discussed a few times, but no big deal. I purchased the book almost a year ago but have yet to read it. I'd like to, as I know I'll like it, and I'd like to purposefully avoid any more similarities with this series. I just haven't gotten around to it. It is brought up a lot so I wonder how similar it is to this book. I haven't seen the movie yet either.

PS: What's up Charlie! I really love your artwork. You inspired me to draw my first zombies the other day, it was also my first fan-art...definitely my first "herd"... Anyways, I had a blast playing around in the world you get to live in all the time. You're one talented and fortunate bastard.

Keep it up, fellas.

Patrick McKinnon

Why is the note to Charlie a post script? You addressed the email to all of us. That's just insulting, dude.

Dear Walking Dead!

I am a soldier in the infantry, currently deployed to Afghanistan. I wanted you to know how much I enjoy your title. The intensity, vibrancy, and truth of your writing and the clarity and excitement of your art are something I eagerly wait for every month.

Things here are often hard, and a title willing to take on the hard issues is a welcome thing.

Be well, and thanks again.

Specialist Indra Geerts
Wardak Province, Afghanistan

Thank you very much, Indra. I'll continue not to pull any punches in the series and you stay safe. It's very flattering to hear that you're reading the book over there. Any measure of comfort we can give you is the least we can do. I hope you'll be back home very soon.

Robert,

For a long time my only complaint about this amazing series was that it was occasionally late.

Some time at the end of 2008 you made a pledge to have the issues ship on time. If you include November of 2008 you've had 14 issues ship in thirteen months - all of which have been on time. It's amazing that one creative team can crank this amount of work at this high of a level. That's quite an accomplishment.

Now, if you start missing dates in 2010...well....let's just say those "baby killer" remarks might start up again.

Congrats again.
Brandon Borzelli
PS - Eugene is a dirtbag.

This issue may have missed its date by a week due to the holidays, but maybe not. Regardless, we're blazing through issues right now and 2010 is looking good. So fear not... and give Eugene a chance.

Kirkman,

The Walking Dead №67 could be called the Revelations and Waterworks issue. It was a nice change of pace issue, but I'm kinda bracing for impact. Whenever you do something like this, it's like the calm before the storm. Can't wait for the Washington issues to come out. I've been reading

this book since issue №6, and it's still a powerful read. Even though I enjoy Johns' Green Lantern, Smith's RASL and Brubaker's Captain America, The Walking Dead is hands down my favorite comic book, and it has been for years now.

Wow, that's pretty good company we're keeping there. Although, if you like Brubaker's Captain America and you're not reading Criminal or Incognito... you're INSANE. Now if only Geoff Johns would do a creator-owned book...

Zombieland. What did you think? I still like Shawn of the Dead better, but I thought it was major fun. Does a movie like this boost your sales at all?

No, our sales don't seem to have been altered, we're still on our usual slight uptick in numbers (which still continues to this day, miraculously). I liked the movie quite a bit. It was all kinds of amazing. All the actors were great, the story was fun, the action was cool. Best use of running zombies, I'd say. It doesn't come close to Shaun of the Dead. Shaun had so much emotion to go along with the comedy. Shaun was funny because the people in the story were funny, but I'd never write it off as a funny or silly zombie movie. I think it stands up against the best of zombie movies (Romero) quite nicely.

Idea: TWD Annual. An anthology featuring stories about the other past and present cast members, like Tyreese, maybe some before the outbreak. On those it would be very cool to have them in color, and once the weirdness and the biting starts, the color starts seeping out till it becomes gray. It would also be a chance to see other artists like old-school-horror-meisters Gene Colan and Bernie Wrightson, and younger guns like Greg Capullo, George Pratt, Ryan Ottley and Kenneth

Rocafort do their take, because Charlie Adlard should remain forever on the regular book.

Victor Rosario Fermaint

Personally, I'm not really interested in exploring the back stories of all these characters in an annual. What would be the point? I'd have to have the stories in the annual matter, right? So they'd need to affect the book in some way or it would just be pointless throwaway stories. It would be fun to work with those artists, for sure, but as of right now, I really, really like that The Walking Dead #1 is the beginning, and it continues numerically with no interruption. As long as you keep the book format consistent (comic, trade, hardcover, etc) you just need to read them in sequence and it all makes sense. I don't want to do annuals or tie-in minis or anything like that. I know I do that on Invincible but it's a superhero book and lends itself to that kind of stuff (and that kind of stuff is fun) but The Walking Dead is one continuing story.

That said, if this TV show really takes off, and I can't say I'll be able to resist the urge to cash in on this thing forever! Don't hold it against me.

Hey Kirkman,

Have you considered giving Rick a prosthetic? I was just thinking it would be pretty easy to make a brain-stabbing tool that would fit over his stump.

Mitchel Rexroad

YES. Actually. At the very least he could strap a machete to his forearm and it would be quite effective. I really wanted to do that but with all the ASH comments I got and "What's he going to attach to his arm?" letters I got, I

thought it would play too... funny? I don't know. It makes sense for him to put SOMETHING there. But any kind of make-shift weapon thing would seem goofy, I think. So I didn't do it.

Hey Kirkman,

My son and daughter and I read your comic together every month. It is very fun and much looked forward to by all of us and I have been reading since issue №1!

I recently attended parent-teacher conferences, and my daughter's sophomore English teacher is the same teacher that I had in High School. We called her Mrs. B for short, and she remembered me pretty well. She told me how creative and clever my daughter was (of course, good DNA right?) and she told me how most stories and poems my daughter writes involve the undead. I told her about the best thing I had read in years, The Walking Dead. I described it to her in detail, and she wrote it down on a notepad. After I was finished she asked if it would be appropriate for H.S. English class. I told her that the ideas were very mature and some content was possibly offensive to some people, but an advanced class should have no problems, and she said she would look into it. Do you hear that Kirkman! I am going to get your work taught in High School! I mean, seriously, how cool is that?

Jeremy Devor

That's TERRIFYING Jeremy! I mean, do you want groups of people outside my house with pitchforks (well, MORE groups of people)? This could only end badly. This is a mature book after all. I don't see that flying in a high school class any time soon.

Could be cool though, something to put

hair on their chests (even the girls). Keep me posted if it happens.

Dear Mr. Kirkman....

Issue №67 was a nice change. Another new guy walks up at the end of the issue. By this time if I was with Rick's group the guy would be dead meat - LOL. I would have trust issues with strangers by now.

They do too.

I also notice you didn't have a preview of the next issue. What gives? That always makes me worry. Is there going to be a next issue?

Trust me, if it ever gets to a point where there won't be a new issue, you'll know about it well in advance. Hopefully that won't be for a good long time.

Don't get me wrong. I still am a loyal fan of The Walking Dead as well as a few other mags you put out. And I was really looking forward to some zombie pigs. Guess that won't happen now. I don't know if we are still going to Washington, DC or not but it will be interesting to see if they do. I suppose it will involve wiping dead body parts on their bodies. Gotta get some food.

Incidentally, I pulled out a package of biscuit mix and had to check the expiration date. It was out of date two years ago. And the biscuits sucked - LOL. So they got thrown out. So I can certainly see what dilemma Rick and his group will have with finding food. Hope they can get a hold of some c-rations. Those have a bunch of salt but they are made for people in a survival situation. I would say this is a survival situation.

Keep writing. I'll keep reading.

Michael L. Heffron

I'm sure there was a time when Rick and crew would have been happy to have some crappy biscuits. Luckily, from the looks of things, they could be having fresh biscuits sometime soon.

Dear Kirkman,

Man... simply amazing.

I've been on this ride for over six years now - like a lot of your readers - and it never seems to slow down. Thank you for that. And thank you for keeping it in black & white... somehow it feels cleaner and scarier at the same time.

Coupla questions if you can spare a minute:

1) Did the "Cast List" at the back of the issues get too big to keep printing? Loved having a cheat sheet...but I'm lazy, all I have to do is read the issue - not write it.

I promise we'll run that again real soon, especially with adding all the new characters we'll be adding soon. But I'm lazy, too! Which is why we haven't updated it.

2) I can never go anywhere without running into someone I know or recognize... any chance the survivors will run into zombies they "used" to know? I can picture Abraham going "Wait a second... is that Cousin Phil?!" *BLAM*

I'm just sayin'.

Anyway - thanks for the great reading material every month.

Ryan G

With the kind of ground this group is covering, it's doubtful. I mean, you don't run into a lot of family while vacationing in a random place, do

you? So we won't be seeing that any time soon.

Aaaaand with that we bring this letters column to a close.

Remember kids, it's twenty-ten, not two-thousand ten. Isn't it so much more fun to say twenty ten? I'll see you all back here next month.

-Robert Kirkman